THE FIGHTING DECADE, BY GRANVILLE HICKS

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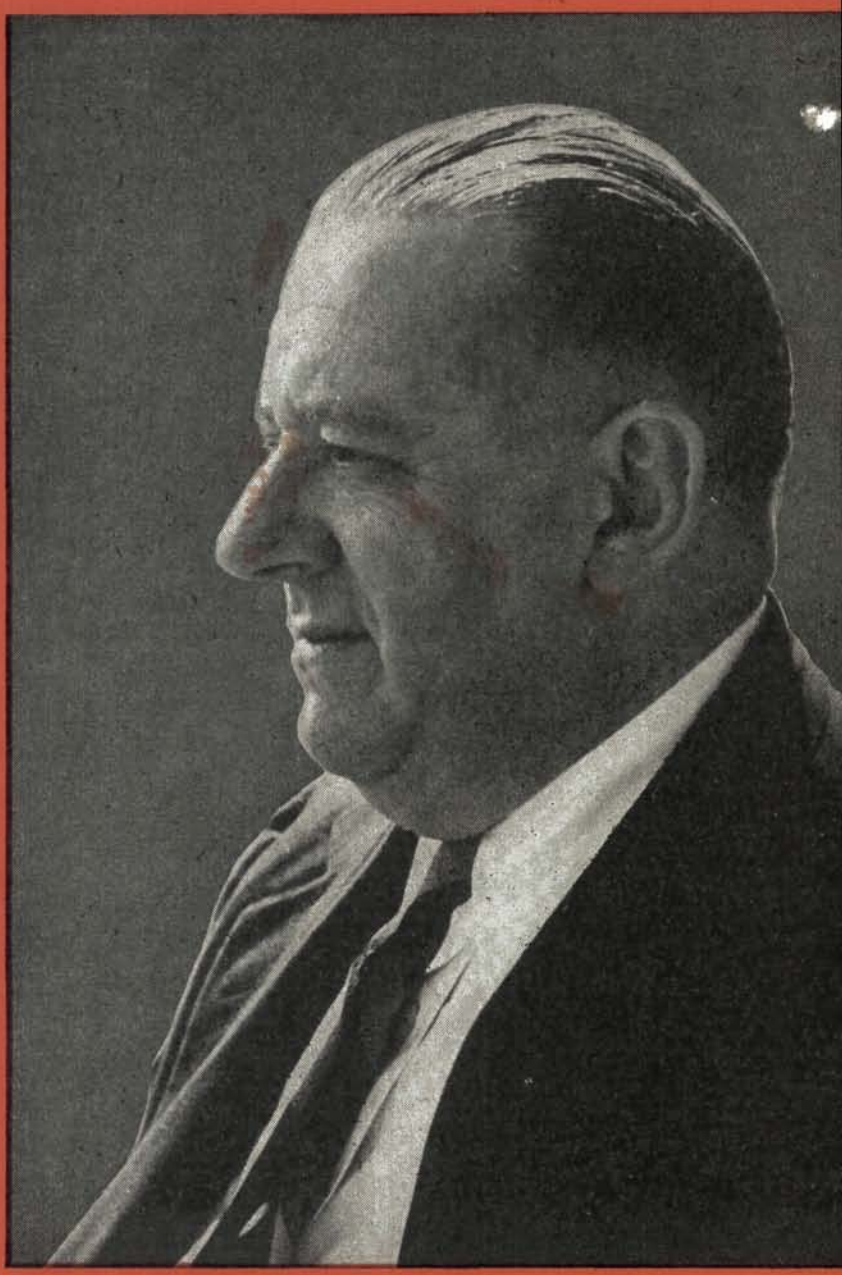

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON "writes good history because he is a good observer and an artist" . . . *(See page 6)*

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The Fighting Decade

GRANVILLE HICKS

THE movement of American literature from about 1890 to about 1920 can be summed up in the winning of a certain number of rights: the right to deal with political and economic problems; the right to express a naturalistic philosophy; the right to recognize and describe sexual passion; the right to reject conventional morality as a standard of criticism. A series of books stand as markers: "Maggie," "The Octopus," "The Jungle," "Together," "Susan Lenox," "The Genius," "Winesburg, Ohio," "Main Street." In the early twenties the battle was won; Lewis, Dreiser, Sandburg, Masters, Mencken, O'Neill became part of American intellectual life. Their work was known and talked about by everyone who made any pretense to literacy.

Sinclair Lewis's novels were "the result of disillusioning discoveries about the American social fabric."

The writers, though they had struggled hard, did not win the battle singlehanded. The progress of industrialism had been steadily undermining nineteenth century mores, and the war accelerated the disintegration. After the disruptions of war, the prosperity of the twenties completed the destruction of the old values and created a new atmosphere. When a people is in fact abandoning the old way of life, it belatedly accepts the rebels whose insistence on just this course has previously irritated it. Of the hundreds of thousands who read "Main Street" and "An American Tragedy," probably a tremendous majority disliked the books, and thought they were rejecting the author's ideas, but they had been brought to a greater degree of tolerance than they realized.

Literary history has laws of its own, but it moves within the larger history of the epoch, and the increasing brevity of literary cycles is itself a sign of the times. Moreover, though the young author thinks he is reacting against his predecessor on literary grounds, there are invariably social causes of which he is unconscious. When, therefore, the "younger generation" of the late twenties began to make faces at the "middle generation," we might have anticipated a new turn in American thinking. Hemingway, Roberts, Wilder, Wescott, and other talented men and women were not content to do what Dreiser, Anderson, and Lewis had done. We take that for granted as a proper feeling for a new generation, but there have been eras in which one generation has built upon another. In our era, however, change involves rejection; that is part of the pattern of the times.

As usual, there were critics to articulate—and exaggerate—the new attitudes. In particular, there was a bright young man, just out of college, who was later to play some small part in the rise of the literary left and was eventually to become a radio star. He was Clifton P. Fadiman, and in December, 1927, he wrote an article called, "On Contemporary American Fiction," for the *Nation*. "The chief fault," he said, "lies in confusing a sociological importance with an artistic importance. What I mean is this. The novels of Dreiser and Lewis and to a lesser degree those of Hergesheimer, Anderson, and Cabell are the

In the early twenties prophetic Eugene O'Neill became part of American intellectual life.

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result less of a genuine esthetic urge than of a series of important and disillusioning discoveries about the American social fabric." And a few months later, writing on "The Whole Duty of the Young Novelist," he made his novelist say: "Things which I have learned to take for granted after reading my elders or which I appear to take for granted without reading them —these things I must not use as thematic material. . . . I have learned, for example, that the American middle class is dull, stupid, and materialistic. I cannot become indignant about it. . . . Similarly, it is impossible for me to get excited about the discovery of sex, the depravity of American politics, or the nineteenth century materialism of Herbert Spencer. . . . As I learn more and more about my European contemporaries I receive a simple but valuable insight: that the novel is to them a craft in which the most exquisite pleasure is received by the novelist in the posing and solution of esthetic problems."

No one can deny that there is an "exquisite pleasure" in the solving of esthetic problems, but the amount of importance attached to that pleasure varies not merely with the individual temperament but also with the temper of the times. In the late twenties it was possible for a few authors to feel that this pleasure outweighed all other duties and satisfactions of the literary life, but even then, as Mr. Fadiman unconsciously betrayed, most writers were looking for something more. They were looking for a philosophy of life to oppose to the philosophy of the middle generation, that indefinable melange of snobbishness and democracy, selfishness and humanitarianism, Nietzschean ruthlessness and shamefaced sentimentality, reckless honesty and schoolboy prurience. In the twenties, when, as Robert Frost said with the fatuousness into which his common sense occasionally betrays him, life went sc unterribly, it was the easiest thing in the world to assume that the masses could take care of themselves.

That humanism should have presented itself to fill the recognized need for a philosophy against the middle generation was a kind of accident. That is, the need did not give birth to humanism but utilized something that had been precariously kept alive in academic halls for thirty years. The great humanist battle, however, was purely a product of the social and intellectual conditions of the period. People were looking for something, and they thought that possibly humanism was it.

Probably humanism made few converts in the brief months when it was in the headlines, but that does not diminish its importance. The interest in humanism was of many kinds, varying from a comforting feeling that here was a return to Victorian stability to a sort of super-sophistication, but at the core was the search for a philosophy on the part of a section of the middle class that had outgrown H. L. Mencken as well as Edgar Guest. These people were tired of a literature that was perpetually in revolt and seemed to have no goals but freedom and sophistication, both defined almost entirely in negative terms. Humanism was by implication aristocratic, and it offered a justification of indifference to the lot of the masses, but at the same time it had the moral earnestness that the average member of the middle class cannot escape from. It seemed, in short, as if it might be something America had never had and at the moment wanted—a philosophy for thoughtful reactionaries.

In the brief, bitter, and often comic battle, the humanists found arrayed against them not only the entire middle generation but also the majority of the younger writers, and on their side were only a handful of academicians, a few noisy recruits, and a small section of the reading public, its size incalculable and its support uncertain. Nevertheless, the humanists did force their younger opponents to redefine their position, dissociating themselves in some degree from the Menckens and Boyds, who merely repeated in shriller voices what they had said in 1913. Moreover, the anti-humanists did not win because their logic was overwhelming or because the humanists were fools, but because the rise of humanism had coincided with the decline of the stock market. By the time of the Carnegie Hall exhibition most persons, even in sedate literary and academic circles, were worrying about their salaries and their investments rather than Rousseau and his evil horde. If the depression had not come, that is to say, humanism might have had an influence far more significant than its little vogue in the newspapers.

MIKE GOLD'S famous piece on Thornton Wilder appeared in November, 1930, just as Seward Collins, in a spirited rearguard action, was attacking a score of American critics with at least as much violence as Gold directed against Wilder. But the Gold-Wilder controversy was as patently post-depression as the humanist fight was pre-depression. Just as Babbitt's *Forum* article had not differed much from dozens of earlier pieces, so Gold's review repeated what he had been saying for ten years. But in the second year of the depression readers could not dismiss talk of misery and exploitation as the aberration of a fanatic.

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Caricature by Eva Herrmann
Sherwood Anderson

Moreover, the depression, making revolution more than an article of faith in the Marxian creed, gave Gold confidence and prophetic quality, and he had never written so eloquently. "The genteel spirit of the new parlor-Christianity," he said, "pervades every phrase of Mr. Wilder's rhetoric. What gentle theatrical sighs! what lovely, well-composed deaths and martyrdoms! what languishings and flutterings of God's sinning doves!" Then he asked his rhetorical questions: "Where are the modern streets of New York, Chicago and New Orleans in these little novels? Where are the cotton mills, and the murder of Ella May and her songs? Where are the child slaves of the beet fields? Where are the stockbroker suicides, the labor racketeers or passion and death of the coal miners? Where are Babbitt, Jimmy Higgins and Anita Loos's Blonde?" He ended: "'For there is a land of the living and a land of the dead, and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning.' And nobody works in a Ford plant, and nobody starves looking for work, and there is nothing but Love in God's ancient Peru, Italy, Greece, if not in God's capitalist America 1930."

In the passionate protests that followed, the significant fact was the inability of Thornton Wilder's admirers to dismiss Gold's onslaught as nonsense and forget about it. From the literary point of view, the remarkable thing was their failure to see that Gold's review was a completely non-political statement of personal taste. The critical principles implicit in it can, I think, be defended, but they are wholly implicit. Gold wrote out of a wrath as pure and unconsidered as the wrath of any of those who objected to his review. It seemed to him outrageous that, in a world whose injustices were many and were constantly being intensified and dramatized by the depression, a man should hold such attitudes as Wilder's and deal with such themes. He was attacking, on moral grounds, the evasiveness and cowardice that he believed he detected in Wilder and his admirers. Wrong he may have been, but the quality of his criticism was no different from that of Mr. Paul Elmer More's when he described "Manhattan Transfer" as an explosion in a cesspool. "Hardly have we emerged from a wave of humanist criticism," Henry Hazlitt wrote, "which rated a work of fiction high or low in direct ration to the amount of will-to-refrain exhibited by its hero, than we are hit by a wave of Communist criticism, which hoots or hails a work of art in proportion as it seems to oppose, ignore, or support the opinions of a German economist who died in 1883." The accusation may or may not have applied to other examples of Marxist criticism; it did not apply to Gold's review of Wilder. Gold was not worrying about Marx's theories, but about his own state of mind, which made Wilder's books not merely worthless but an insult to the American people.

The point is important, for, throughout the thirties, the faults of left-wing writers have been attributed to political dogmas, when, even if the faults existed, they should have been attributed to ignorance, failures of insight, literary incompetence, or other weaknesses of that order. The assumption has been that, for some reason, presumably sheer perversity, various writers have become communists and have then proceeded to write novels or poems or plays in accordance with their political theories. Of a few writers this is true, and there can be no doubt of the badness of their work. But most left authors have written, as other authors write, out of their perceptions and emotions and reflections, which happen to have found a political as well as a literary expression. It is not altogether easy nowadays to remember what the early thirties were like. In 1931 and 1932 a complete economic collapse seemed imminent, and you only had to walk about the streets to realize that, if it took place, it would affect the whole of life and become the only subject that people could think about. A few authors were directly hit by the depression; the majority were not; but it takes a peculiar kind of insensitivity, not usually found among writers, for a man to remain indifferent when the world threatens to tumble about his head.

What authors saw and felt changed their writing and their politics. As a rule, the political effect, being on a somewhat simpler plane, manifested itself first. It was early in 1931, for example, that Edmund Wilson wrote his "Appeal to Progressives," in which he proposed to "take Communism away from the Communists." The Communists were not unnaturally opposed to the suggestion, but actually Wilson was moving closer to the Communist Party, and many intellectuals were moving with him. As Lincoln Steffens said, the Communists seemed to be the only group with a program and the courage to put it into practice. With Communists leading strikes and marshalling the unemployed, they imposed their leadership on most of the writers who felt that something had to be done. No wonder that fifty authors and artists, including some of the best in America, signed a manifesto for Foster and Ford in 1932.

The harmony that produced the 1932 manifesto, "Culture and the Crisis," did not last long. Many of the signers of the manifesto dropped away and became bitter critics of the party. But other intellectuals came under its influence, and after 1935, when the policy of the democratic front was adopted, its prestige once more grew. The party no longer sought to pledge the intellectuals to a revolutionary program, contenting itself if it could involve them in the fight against fascism. Fascism being what it is, this was not a difficult task, and scores of writers allied themselves with avowed and secret Communists in united front organization for progressive political action.

Meanwhile the literary battles went on. The controversy Gold had launched in the *New Republic* was carried to the *Nation* by Henry Hazlitt, and later he and V. F. Calverton continued it in the *Modern Quarterly*. Newton Arvin, Joseph Freeman, and others supported Gold, and M. R. Werner, Elmer Davis, and Paul Rosenfeld joined in the attack. In the *New Republic* Archibald MacLeish fired a double barrel of prose and poetry at the Marxists, and H. L. Mencken and Louis Adamic

(*Continued on page* 16)

Caricature by Luis Quintanilla
Ernest Hemingway

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Van Looning the Pacific

THE STORY OF THE PACIFIC. By Hendrik Willem van Loon. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1940. 387 pp., ill. with sketches and maps by the author. $3.

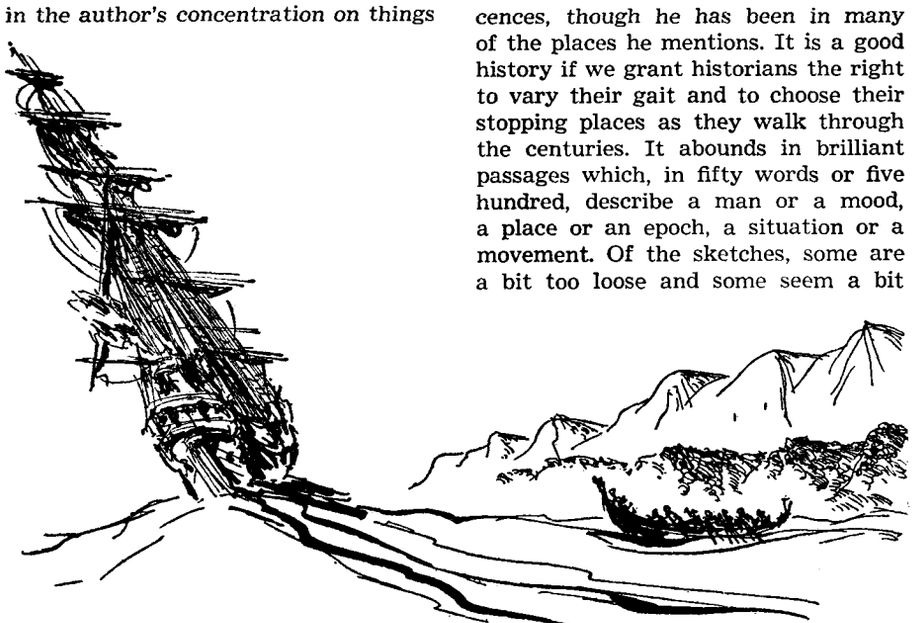
Reviewed by BRUNO LASKER

MR. VAN LOON here talks unhurriedly of things that have been on his mind from early youth. No mere scrivener could have concocted this story of seafaring exploration, no matter how many years he shut himself up in libraries with the best "source material." Van Loon understands the lives and thoughts of the old sea dogs who have charted the world for us; he has so often followed them in imagination; he has allowed so many of the scenes of their exploits to speak to him. Though he occasionally remarks, "this is mere speculation on my part—no one was there to see it," he still writes good history, because he is honest, well-read, a good observer, and an artist.

He has his eye on what is important; and that includes much which at first glance may seem trivial yet is significant from the standpoint of those dead generations of Spaniards, Dutchmen, Englishmen, and many more who schemed their adventures into the unknown, often for reasons by no means praiseworthy, and saw them through a determination rare in all ages. He thus recreates for us the triumph of some skipper who happens to have been the first to report some few miles of coastline, and also the greatness of the ancient Polynesian mariners of whose voyages there is no written record.

The charm of this book lies largely in the author's concentration on things that interest him. His story more or less hangs together, but he does not mind leaving holes for others to fill. When he interrupts his narrative to discourse on dead trees or on the political uses of formality, to explain the similarity between Shogun rule in Japan and Merovingian in France, why ship construction improved so remarkably in the seventeenth century, or why it will be difficult to win Latin America for real democracy, we hardly realize the deviation until he pulls us back again with a brief apology. For these asides are as natural as those that occur in any conversation between well-read and interesting people. We are delighted when, quite incidentally, he tells us things we have always vaguely wanted to know: the origins of a score or so of place names, the reason why Brazil speaks Portuguese, what the people in the islands really think of tourists or of missionaries, and so forth. And it seems natural enough that every once in a while the author should dwell on some question that is bothering him and for which he has found no satisfactory answer.

It would be an injustice to Mr. van Loon to ascribe the interest of this book entirely to its pleasing contrast with those formal histories whose authors are more adept at hiding their prejudices and their lack of penetration by spreading their words evenly over every part of the era and of the area which they have undertaken to cover. Actually, he has used the most reliable information and, evidently, has consulted on controversial questions men of scholarship and good sense. This is neither a book for children nor a book of romantic travel reminiscences, though he has been in many of the places he mentions. It is a good history if we grant historians the right to vary their gait and to choose their stopping places as they walk through the centuries. It abounds in brilliant passages which, in fifty words or five hundred, describe a man or a mood, a place or an epoch, a situation or a movement. Of the sketches, some are a bit too loose and some seem a bit labored; but they accentuate the note of freedom and loneliness which the Pacific Ocean, more than any other body of water, epitomizes in human experience.



Pen sketches from "The Story of the Pacific"

Tasman discovers New Zealand.

Port Moresby, New Guinea.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

TEN FAMOUS BOYS

Described below are ten boys who will always be boys because they are immortalized in the pages of literature. How many of them do you recognize? Allow 5 points for each one you can call by name, and another 5 if you can name the author who created him. A score of 70 is par, 80 is good, 90 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 14.

1. He was apprenticed to an undertaker.
2. He and his girl friend were lost for three days in an underground cavern.
3. It wasn't safe to call him "a little gentleman" when there was a cauldron of fresh tar in the neighborhood.
4. Deciding never to grow up, he ran away to live with the fairies.
5. He wore long curls and velvet suits and called his mother "Dearest."
6. An Irish orphan, he grew up in India in the company of an aged Buddhist priest.
7. A newspaper office boy, he scooped the town with the story of a prize fight and a murderer's arrest.
8. The pride of a British regiment stationed in India, he proved his heroism and dropped his nickname.
9. He was an unwilling host to the Duke of Bilgewater and the Lost Dauphin.
10. Several tigers frightened him into giving up his beautiful new clothes.

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The Poet as Traveler

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

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HERE are five traveling poets,* some of whom are native by instinct and temperament, some of whom are more at home abroad than at home. Four of the five are comparative newcomers; four are American by birth, one by adoption. Their books frequently contradict one another; sometimes the separate work contradicts itself.

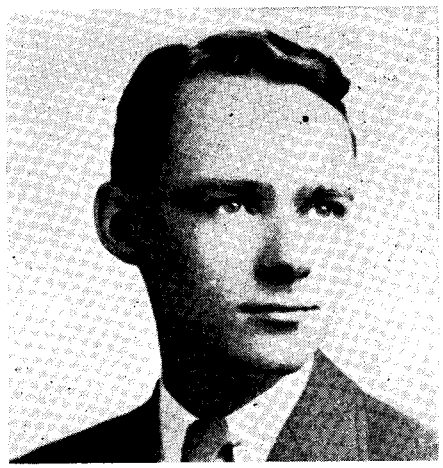
Mr. Coleman's verse, for example, is a pretty study in paradox. Its style, as well as its subject matter, is a contradiction of influences; a desire to experiment is continually diminished, if not completely checked, by the dictates of tradition. His book opens with the long title-poem, a graphic thirty-nine page picture of a threatened world just prior to Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939; it ends with a conventional ballad about Jesus's and Joseph of Arimathea's legendary visits to Glastonbury. Mr. Coleman's technique shows the same wavering between the expected cadence and the brusque dissonance. There is definite skill here, considerable awareness, and no little imagination. But Mr. Coleman has still to combine a sense of timeliness with whatever may be his particular tone. It will be interesting to watch him perform in a more strictly local habitation.

Mr. Abbe travels in a more limited gamut. He is young and gifted; he has a penchant, though not a passion, for experiment; he has looked at life steadily if not whole; he does not argue the reader into anger or fool himself into sentimentality. And yet the level of his volume is scarcely higher than that of the undergraduate poems he wrote five or six years ago. There are some charming transcriptions of scenery and tributes to birds—but, unfortunately, they recall the sharper accents of more distinctive forerunners. The polyphonic phrases of "Shape of My People" and "Henry" (perhaps the best of the portraits) are dexterous—but they remind us how much better John Gould Fletcher and Amy Lowell employed this amorphous form which succeeds only in distorting rhymed prose and prosy verse. There are quiet evocations of New England—but Mr. Abbe walks trails blazed by pioneers and roads charted by his immediate predecessors without cutting new timber or extending the topography. He has the prime New England trait of laconic speech; he has taught himself how to condense the loosest thinking so not to exhaust the reader. He has not yet learned how to excite him.

Culberson

Elliott Coleman's verse is a pretty study in paradox.

Marie de L. Welch's lively accent carries through in the second section of her book.



George Abbe does not argue the reader into anger or fool himself into sentimentality.

The first part of Miss Welch's book is misleading and misrepresentative. It is given over to the common stock of poeticisms and prettifications, to the enthusiastic celebration of Spring and a round of applause for Beauty. But the author's lively accent begins to come through in the second section, maintains itself in the third, and declares itself fully in the fourth and last. The second section is devoted to poems about animals—seemingly another stock subject—yet these beasts are individualized by a combination of mockery and tenderness, a kind of whimsical gravity which is as winning as it is fresh. "Gopher and Mole," "Love to Ancestors," "I Do Not Call Them Beautiful," "Orgy," "Rain of Robins," "The Towhee in Autumn" and "The Kitten That Came Down from the Forest" will inevitably find their way into many types of anthologies.

But it is the final section which reveals the author's dominant note as well as her dominating concern. This is the poet at grips with the modern world, challenging, grim, even desperate, but not defeated. It is not a conclusive struggle; it is filled with contradictions. But the author is aware of her own dangers, and she is quick to analyze those inconsistencies she cannot avoid. The confident and slightly swaggering title-poem is corrected by the hard acceptance of its sequel "And This Is Our Own." There can be no doubt about the validity of such poems as "Camp Corcoran," "The Nomad Harvester's," "The Living," and

(*Continued on page* 16)

AN AMERICAN IN AUGUSTLAND. By Elliott Coleman. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1940. 82 pp. $2.

WAIT FOR THESE THINGS. By George Abbe. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1940. 83 pp. $2.

THIS IS OUR OWN. By Marie de L. Welch. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1940. 75 pp. $1.25.

COLLECTED POEMS: 1917-1939. By Edward Davison. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1940. 195 pp. $2.

CAFÉS AND CATHEDRALS. By C. F. MacIntyre. New York: Oxford University Press. 1940. 88 pp. $2.

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FOR A UNIT DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

THE democracy James Bryce wrote about in his "American Commonwealth" was a political and economic unit. America in 1889 was still too young, too malleable, to pose for a full-sized portrait. But Bryce, even though anticipating that "fifty years hence America will differ at least as much from what it is now as it differs now from the America which de Tocqueville described," perceived that this nation was "made all of a piece; its institutions are the product of its economic and social conditions and the expressions of its character." Advantages of its social organization or disorganization were inseparable from the advantages of its free institutions. When you discussed American democracy you could no more conceive of fundamental dangers within the structure of life than you could within the way of life. Liberty was not only self-evident but indivisible.

But in the fifty years since Bryce published his observations and feelings about America much has happened to upset the unit definition of democracy. Two distinct entities have emerged: the economic and the political democracy. Far from complementing each other, they are held to be rigidly contradictory; each has given birth to disciples and warriors who argue or fight for the merits and advantages of one over the other. The form has been held incompatible with the spirit. Liberty today is no longer indivisible; there is even a serious question whether many believe it to be self-evident.

Where or when or why the cleavage began and how it developed cannot be explained in the scanty generalizations of a brief discussion such as this, but there can be no question that it has been enlarging continually and that it now appears to be as deep as it is wide. Whatever the causes, the effects are clear enough: the world is being told that it cannot have its bread and its ballots too, without any proof that its choice will be permanently assured. Would-be economic democracy, by itself and stripped of its dependent, free institutions, has tended to flow into the stream of totalitarianism, where its current has lost both identity and direction. Would-be political democracy has tended to lose vitality and purpose, failing to build adequate jetties against the increasing pressure of totalitarian tides. Thus the tributary, swallowed up by rising waters, has come back to challenge the source.

America, once the economic and political model and inspiration for the world, has watched with horror and confusion as one democracy after another was engulfed by the tide. The realization has suddenly gripped this nation that almost overnight most of the dams have been broken through and that soon the current may be pointed this way. But no longer can we look to our oceans to absorb the groundswells from over the seas; bridges have been built which can cross over to the minds of men.

The problem then is twofold: we must build jetties against the swelling waters from far away; but we must also attempt to find out why it is that there are tributaries within us which are stretching out their fingers to meet the oncoming tide. And we shall have to provide a working, not a theoretical answer. Nor shall we be able to derive genuine comfort from yielding to the all-too-easy temptation of finding a melodramatic outlet for our fears by hunting down the much-publicized fifth column, which is but a quickening force in the stream and not the stream itself. We must come face to face with the reality that millions of Americans have forgotten or find it hard to say just what their stake in democracy really is; and that they may not be able to resist the promises of those who hold out bread in exchange for ballots, despite our warnings that such a sacrifice may in fact bring them nothing at all. Advice is not enough; we shall have to do something. To paraphrase Palmerston, if we want people to be conservative, we shall have to give them something to conserve.

But it will be difficult to do anything unless we first return to the unit definition of democracy. Much of our plight has come about because we have looked at only one side of democracy and have mistaken it for the whole, relieving ourselves of the obligation even to think about the problems of Americans who have lost their places in America. We shall have to begin thinking seriously about our economic as well as political responsibilities. Separated, they become antagonistic and seek to destroy the other, but fused and sealed into a unit they become the promise of America.

Fifty years ago a young historian named Woodrow Wilson wrote:

> Presently there will come a time when America will be surprised to find herself grown old . . . strained, perplexed—when she will be obliged to pull herself together, adopt a new regimen of life, husband her resources, concentrate her strength, trust her best, not her average members. That will be the time of change.

Perhaps that time is now.

N. C.

Make No Demand

By Martha Bacon

MAKE no demand of Beauty that she stay
To watch with you. Think not to set her forth
From root to blossom. It was not her way
To call substantial witness to her worth.
She has no part in faith. She sets no seal
Upon her kiss. Go lie with her a night,
But rise before a jealous dawn shall steal
Upon your bed to claim her as his right.
She is as mutable as flame, as free
As rain upon injustice; her strange wine
Sings in the silent blood. Betrayed is he
Who plights his troth to her, who dares define
The Arc of space, or justify the good
Apollo knew of laurel in the wood.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mr. Pratt's Rebuttal

SIR:—I observe with interest that Mr. Granville Hicks did not particularly like my review of his book, which strikes me as fair and reasonable. I didn't particularly like the book.

However, he raises two points that seem to call for some rebuttal when he questions (by intimation) the right of a "military expert" to speak about utopias, and the authority of this particular one in speaking about rockets.

Mr. Hicks should know that a military expert can no more devote 100 per cent of his time to that lugubrious profession than a policeman out of G. S. Gilbert; and this particular one submits that he has spent several years in gathering, and reading, what he believes is one of the finest collections of utopian literature in the country. He has also written on the subject, if not with authority, at least with acceptibility to editors — *vide SRL,* Oct. 22, 1939 and April 2, 1938.

As for the rockets, may I submit that I was one of the founding members of the American Rocket Society?

FLETCHER PRATT.

New York City.

Meredith Intimations

SIR:—Meredith may not be read much to-day, as a recent cartoon in the *SRL* (Dec. 16, 1939) would suggest, but in the course of some recent research I came across two passages, the first in the Collected Letters of George Meredith, and the second in a book of criticism on Meredith by a French critic which seem to be of almost startling contemporary significance, as though Meredith had had the gift of ominous prophecy—as far back as 1903.

To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*: Feb. 17, 1903: on the occasion of the North Sea Conference: We should be grateful to the Germans for their crusty candor in telling us of their designs upon us. They stir a somnolent people, and, without stooping to regard them as enemies, we can accept them as urgently stimulating rivals, whose aim is to be the first of the world powers, chiefly at our expense. The Kaiser, an estimable gentleman, but not yet a fully-tried sovereign, has drawn in a deep breath of briny air, and would give it out in warships. Germany, once foremost among the nations for intellectual achievements, now spouts Pan-Germanism over Europe, and seeks to command the North Sea. For our part, we have only to take the wanting (sic!) they give us, and be armed, stationed, and alert. That is the way to preserve the peace. For Pan-Germanism challenges many foes, and a Power ambitious to be preponderant in a great Navy as well as a great Army will find its adversary within, besides those that press around it. A slumbering England will offer it the chance it craves before the inevitable financial strain brings it to the ground. A watchful England may look calmly for that certain issue. (*Meredith. Collected Letters. Vol. II.*)

* * * * *

Really, the Englishman, his intelligence dulled by his wealth, will not awaken unless a German invasion occurs, or a slaughter upon his northern shores. We have no army. The army in India is marvellously equipped and disciplined, but what purpose does it serve as regards England? Besides, India is our weak point. We neglect our own European England. One day, when it has crumbled still further, we shall say adieu to our colonies, to the vast continents of the antipodes, to the archipelago spread abroad upon the equatorial seas. We shall then not have enough of a matchless navy to defend ourselves. And if Germany were to beat us as she has beaten France, should we revive? I doubt it. France possesses wealth of many kinds; the wealth of England is strictly commercial. Should anyone extort from us a crushing war-indemnity we are ruined unless we can re-establish our industries and the power to protect our commerce and our food supplies. (*George Meredith. His Life, Genius, and Teaching. By Constantin Photiadès. N. Y.,* 1913.)

SERENA GOSS HALL.

Connecticut College.

"A gentleman from Mars with a manuscript to see you."

Bouquet Dep't.

It was encouraging and edifying to read your featured book review (May 2, *SRL*) on Richard Wright's "Native Son" (whether or not his recent work merits your praise and recognition as some of his adverse critics doubt). Now your generous acceptance of Langston Hughes's "Harlem Literati in the Twenties" in the June 22 issue confirms your policy of freedom from racial prejudice, the social psychological disease.

Indeed, it is gratifying to know that you are aware of the existence of the richest cultural element of the Negro "intelligentsia"; you credit him for his literary talent regardless of his color; you'll publish a redeeming part of his life, the better side which helps to offset the sordid and vulgar things written and said about our "underprivileged" race. Since others, like Hitler in his "Mein Kampf," scandalize and malign us and portray the worst of the Negro, it is quite comforting to see that you display some of the cultural wares which the anti-Negro in his madness of prejudice totally ignores or conceals from the public eye.

Isn't it true that a surprisingly large part of the educated non-Negroid races visualize the Negro only as a common unskilled laborer, an athlete with brawn but not much brain.

Your contribution to the destruction of racial prejudice makes all true members of my race deeply grateful.

CLARENCE PROVOST.

Los Angeles, Cal.

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He Set the Forest to Music

ENCHANTED WANDERER. The Life of Carl Maria von Weber. By Lucy Poate Stebbins and Richard Poate Stebbins. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1940. 345 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by PAUL HENRY LANG

IN his childhood, Weber journeyed to Salzburg and Vienna to study with the two Haydns, later consorting with Schubert, Beethoven, Rossini, Spontini, and E. T. A. Hoffmann, and toward the end of his life, young Wagner watched with admiration his efforts on behalf of German opera, while Berlioz saw in him the embodiment of romanticism. Surely a musician of acknowledged stature whose life was spent amid so brilliant and varied a musical world offers a stimulating subject for the biographer, and the authors of "Enchanted Wanderer" have met the challenge in a most rewarding manner. Unlike the ordinary run of musical biographies, this book is the result of laborious research, and this reviewer does not recall such a conscientious and painstaking essay in several years. The writing is vivid and convincing, events unfold in an effortless sequence, although here and there one is conscious of a somewhat forced novelistic tone. But the man emerges from these pages with the plasticity of a portrait.

The authors disclaim any intention of offering "a treatise on Weber's music." But is this a legitimate approach? Weber was possessed by one absorbing mission, the future of German opera, and to this end he devoted all his energies. Surely the man's portrait cannot be complete without his music, and the authors did in fact find a certain amount of musical discussion impossible to avoid. In this they were less successful than in their purely biographical efforts. The central problem, Italian versus German opera, claims recognition in every chapter. Berating the Dresden court for its preference for Italian works, they fail to take into consideration the more than a century old tradition of Italian opera in the Saxon capital (and for that matter in the other German capitals), a tradition that could not be challenged for the very good reason that until the end of the eighteenth century, German opera was practically non-existent. Everything that is here credited to Weber came from the disparaged Italian opera, "the new dramatic coloring of the orchestration, his persistent and versatile use of the leitmotif . . . his noble characterization of women," etc. Viewed from this angle, Weber's purely musical contribution was not new and one certainly cannot call *Der Freischütz* "the first modern German opera," for it was a Singspiel pure and simple, such as were Hiller's, Mozart's and Beethoven's. The great merit of Weber's operatic works was precisely their popular nature. It was this quality, saturated with the romanticism of the German forest and fairy tale, that made them unmistakably and thoroughly German.

One wonders why, among all their sources—the bibliograph in itself is a remarkable piece of work—the authors found a few bon mots of Ernest Newman alone worth quoting, whereas the many excellent special studies devoted to Weber's music do not seem to have influenced their judgement. There are many other details, some of them technical, such as the seating of the orchestra, etc., that are open to criticism. Were it not for these shortcomings, the "Enchanted Wanderer" would have ranked as an outstanding contribution to American musical literature. As it is now, it is an uncommonly well presented serious biography, invaluable to every student of the music of early romanticism.

Paul Henry Lang is a professor in the Department of Music at Columbia University.

Between the Musical Lines

THE CRITICAL COMPOSER. Edited by Irving Kolodin. New York: Howell-Soskin. 1940. 275 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by KATHARINE SCHERMAN

MR. KOLODIN'S book gives the interested layman a quick view of the opinions of several nineteenth-century composers on contemporary composers and the ways of audiences and conductors in the romantic period of music. It is of more interest to the layman than to a professional student of musical history and criticism, as the selections are too short and too few to give an adequate picture of the philosophy of romanticism which governed both music and criticism in this period.

The best clues to the romantic philosophy to be found in the book are the selections from the writings of Berlioz and Wagner on Beethoven. Berlioz analyzes four Beethoven symphonies—the Third, Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth. He endeavors to show how Beethoven created emotional images in music through the use of revolutionary principles of harmony. His approach is romantic in that he is interested more in the emotional effects which certain passages of the music create than in a scientific analysis of the cohesion of the whole piece, such as would be attempted by a teacher of music analysis today.

Wagner's interpretation of the music of Beethoven is a pseudo-historical one designed to illustrate the general superiority of the nineteenth century German over all musicians of another age or an alien race. Beethoven, *The German,* is extolled as the model of the romantic soul freed from the worldly chains of patronage and poverty; freed, therefore, in his music, from any trace of subordination to popular taste, frivolity, humor, or tradition. Wagner exalts Beethoven's blindness as the agent which permitted the composer to find an inner beauty and joy secure from the ugly taint of the outer world. This essentially romantic and almost religious concept of Beethoven entirely leaves out of account the frequent bitterness and carping sorrow in Beethoven's music; it also leaves out the contredanses and the popular overtures by means of which Beethoven achieved his freedom from the worldly chain of starvation. Worse than that, it assumes that because a composer like Mozart is dependent on the composition of popular dance music for his living, his music is necessarily of a lower order than that of an ugly, blind, unhappy man at odds with the rest of the world.

The book contains little real musical criticism. Mostly it is a collection of impressions—witty, romantic, and bitter, which composers have written between their intervals of composing.

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How to Mark A Book

MORTIMER J. ADLER

LIBRARY

YOU know you have to read "between the lines" to get the most out of anything. I want to persuade you to do something equally important in the course of your reading. I want to persuade you to "write between the lines." Unless you do, you are not likely to do the most efficient kind of reading.

I contend, quite bluntly, that marking up a book is not an act of mutilation but of love.

You shouldn't mark up a book which isn't yours. Librarians (or your friends) who lend you books expect you to keep them clean, and you should. If you decide that I am right about the usefulness of marking books, you will have to buy them. Most of the world's great books are available today, in reprint editions, at less than a dollar.

There are two ways in which one can own a book. The first is the property right you establish by paying for it, just as you pay for clothes and furniture. But this act of purchase is only the prelude to possession. Full ownership comes only when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it is by writing in it. An illustration may make the point clear. You buy a beefsteak and transfer it from the butcher's icebox to your own. But you do not own the beefsteak in the most important sense until you consume it and get it into your bloodstream. I am arguing that books, too, must be absorbed in your bloodstream to do you any good.

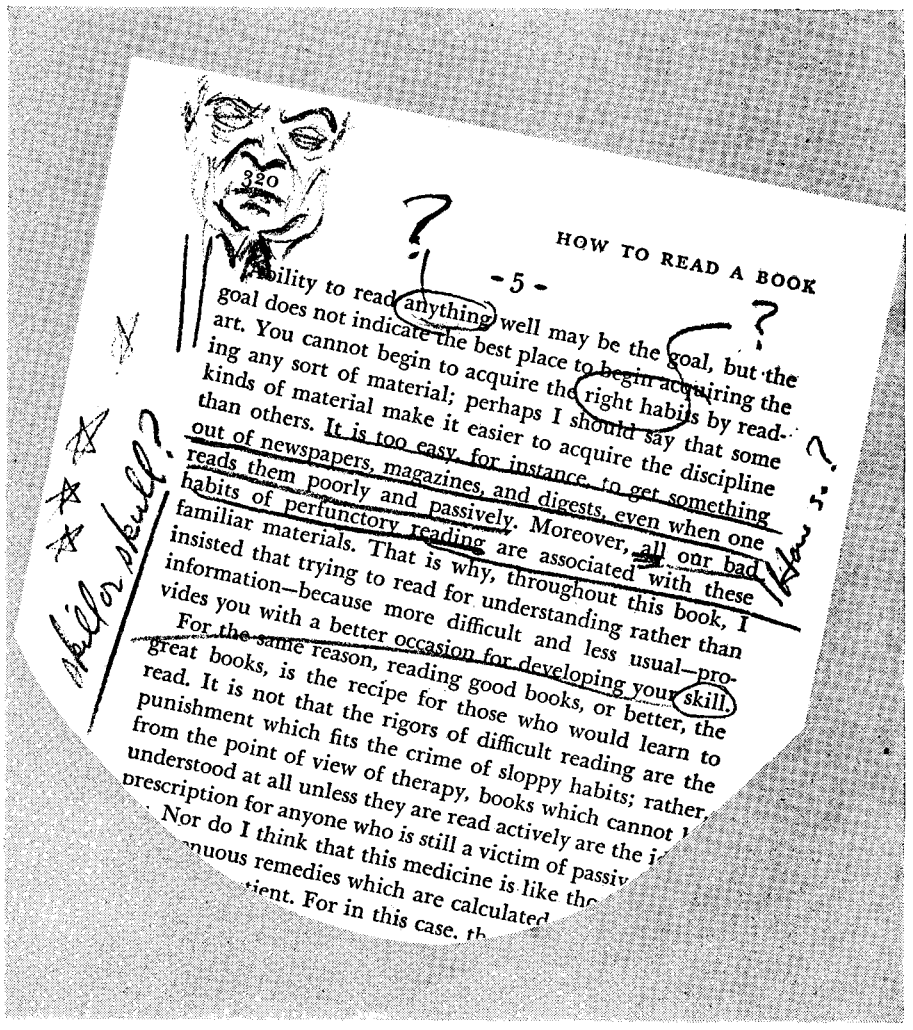
Confusion about what it means to *own* a book leads people to a false reverence for paper, binding, and type—a respect for the physical thing—the craft of the printer rather than the genius of the author. They forget that it is possible for a man to acquire the idea, to possess the beauty, which a great book contains, without staking his claim by pasting his bookplate inside the cover. Having a fine library doesn't prove that its owner has a mind enriched by books; it proves nothing more than that he, his father, or his wife, was rich enough to buy them.

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best-sellers—unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns woodpulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books—a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third has a few books or many—every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. (This man owns books.)

Is it false respect, you may ask, to preserve intact and unblemished a beautifully printed book, an elegantly bound edition? Of course not. I'd no more scribble all over a first edition of "Paradise Lost" than I'd give my baby a set of crayons and an original Rembrandt! I wouldn't mark up a painting or a statue. Its soul, so to speak, is inseparable from its body. And the beauty of a rare edition or of a richly manufactured volume is like that of a painting or a statue.

But the soul of a book *can* be separated from its body. A book is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting. No great musician confuses a symphony with the printed sheets of music. Arturo Toscanini reveres Brahms, but Toscanini's score of the C-minor Symphony is so thoroughly marked up that no one but the maestro himself can read it. The reason why a great conductor makes notations on his musical scores—marks them up again and again each time he returns to study them—is the reason why you should mark your books. If your respect for magnificent binding or typography gets in the way, buy yourself a cheap edition and pay your respects to the author.

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely


HOW TO READ A BOOK
- 5 -
bility to read anything well may be the goal, but the goal does not indicate the best place to begin acquiring the art. You cannot begin to acquire the right habits by reading any sort of material; perhaps I should say that some kinds of material make it easier to acquire the discipline than others. It is too easy, for instance, to get something out of newspapers, magazines, and digests, even when one reads them poorly and passively. Moreover, all our bad habits of perfunctory reading are associated with these familiar materials. That is why, throughout this book, I insisted that trying to read for understanding rather than information—because more difficult and less usual—provides you with a better occasion for developing your skill.
For the same reason, reading good books, or better, the great books, is the recipe for those who would learn to read. It is not that the rigors of difficult reading are the punishment which fits the crime of sloppy habits; rather, from the point of view of therapy, books which cannot
understood at all unless they are read actively are the i
prescription for anyone who is still a victim of passiv
Nor do I think that this medicine is like the
nuous remedies which are calculated
ient. For in this case, th

The *SRL* editors, who yield to no one their firm hold on a pencil, went back to a review copy of Mr. Adler's "How to Read a Book," and came across this page, which, while it illustrates some of the points made by Mr. Adler in his article, demonstrates that he who marks is tempted also to doodle. Perhaps, after all, this page is an example of how *not* to mark a book.

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conscious; I mean wide awake.) In the second place, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed. Let me develop these three points.

If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active. You can't let your eyes glide across the lines of a book and come up with an understanding of what you have read. Now an ordinary piece of light fiction, like, say, "Gone with the Wind," doesn't require the most active kind of reading. The books you read for pleasure can be read in a state of relaxation, and nothing is lost. But a great book, rich in ideas and beauty, a book that raises and tries to answer great fundamental questions, demands the most active reading of which you are capable. You don't absorb the ideas of John Dewey the way you absorb the crooning of Mr. Vallee. You have to reach for them. That you cannot do while you're asleep.

If, when you've finished reading a book, the pages are filled with your notes, you know that you read actively. The most famous *active* reader of great books I know is President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago. He also has the hardest schedule of business activities of any man I know. He invariably reads with a pencil, and sometimes, when he picks up a book and pencil in the evening, he finds himself, instead of making intelligent notes, drawing what he calls "caviar factories" on the margins. When that happens, he puts the book down. He knows he's too tired to read, and he's just wasting time.

But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.

Even if you wrote on a scratch pad, and threw the paper away when you had finished writing, your grasp of the book would be surer. But you don't have to throw the paper away. The margins (top and bottom, as well as side), the end-papers, the very space between the lines, are all available. They aren't sacred. And, best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It's like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.

And that is exactly what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author. Presumably he knows more about the subject than you do; naturally, you'll have the proper humility as you approach him. But don't let anybody tell you that a reader is supposed to be solely on the receiving end. Understanding is a two-way operation; learning doesn't consist in being an empty receptacle. The learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. And marking a book is literally an expression of your differences, or agreements of opinion, with the author.

There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

1. *Underlining*: of major points, of important or forceful statements.

2. *Vertical lines at the margin*: to emphasize a statement already underlined.

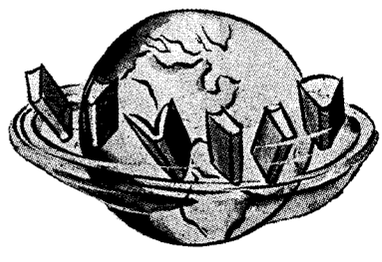
3. *Star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin*: to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able to take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)

4. *Numbers in the margin*: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.

5. *Numbers of other pages in the margin*: to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.

6. *Circling of key words or phrases.*

7. *Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of*: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points right through the books. I use the end-papers at the back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.



The front end-papers are, to me, the most important. Some people reserve them for a fancy bookplate. I reserve them for fancy thinking. After I have finished reading the book and making my personal index on the back end-papers, I turn to the front and try to outline the book, not page by page, or point by point (I've already done that at the back), but as an integrated structure, with a basic unity and an order of parts. This outline is, to me, the measure of my understanding of the work.

IF you're a die-hard anti-book-marker, you may object that the margins, the space between the lines, and the end-papers don't give you room enough. All right. How about using a scratch pad slightly smaller than the page-size of the book—so that the edges of the sheets won't protrude? Make your index, outlines, and even your notes on the pad, and then insert these sheets permanently inside the front and back covers of the book.

Or, you may say that this business of marking books is going to slow up your reading. It probably will. That's one of the reasons for doing it. Most of us have been taken in by the notion that speed of reading is a measure of our intelligence. There is no such thing as the right speed for intelligent reading. Some things should be read quickly and effortlessly, and some should be read slowly and even laboriously. The sign of intelligence in reading is the ability to read different things differently according to their worth. In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through you—how many you can make your own. A few friends are better than a thousand acquaintances. If this be your aim, as it should be, you will not be impatient if it takes more time and effort to read a great book than it does a newspaper.

You may have one final objection to marking books. You can't lend them to your friends because nobody else can read them without being distracted by your notes. Furthermore, you won't want to lend them because a marked copy is a kind of intellectual diary, and lending it is almost like giving your mind away.

If your friend wishes to read your "Plutarch's Lives," "Shakespeare," or "The Federalist Papers," tell him gently but firmly, to buy a copy. You will lend him your car or your coat—but your books are as much a part of you as your head or your heart.

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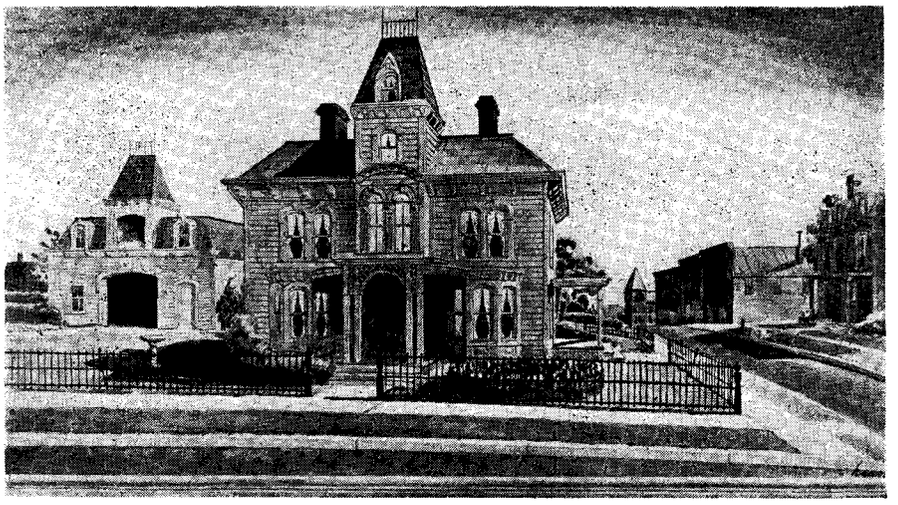

From the jacket-design by Alanson B. Hewes for "Sioux City"

Boom City of the Eighties

SIOUX CITY. By J. Hyatt Downing. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1940. 314 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

J. HYATT DOWNING has written three novels of the Middle Border, which Hamlin Garland with his powerful pessimism first utilized in fiction just fifty years ago. Although Downing has no buoyant illusions about the hard work, the futile battle against drought and insect, the crooked politics, and the shameless rapacity of promoter and land speculator, he knows (with greater perspective and wider personal experience) that Garland did not tell the whole story.

Into his first two novels, "A Prayer for Tomorrow" and "Hope of Living," Downing incorporates personal and family experiences. In "Sioux City" he writes of the town where he has lived only in recent years, limiting himself to the gaudy boom period of the mid-eighties. Although Sioux City was not incorporated until 1857, when its population numbered only four hundred, its growth was so phenomenal that by 1885 enthusiastic citizens visualized it rivaling Chicago as the metropolis of the West. Zealous promoters and real estate opportunists acted accordingly, and with capricious nature's assistance (for a number of seasons the Missouri bottoms produced record crops while elsewhere were droughts and other calamities) actually succeeded in raising the city by its own bootstraps. A sharp growth in population was accompanied by preposterous schemes of expansion, although conservatives and skeptics realized that Sioux City because of its geographical location would never become an industrial city of a million inhabitants. The frenzy lasted long enough to see the dream of an elevated railway (the third in America) come true, and the completion of the Corn Palace, which brought President Cleveland to the city for a two-hour visit. The bubble burst in 1893, but the novel carries its story only to 1887.

The narrative is concerned principally with young Anthony Trant, who returns to Sioux City from college in 1884 and determines to reap a fortune from the boom. He is ruthless and cold, and no compunctious visitings of remorse block his march to his first million. Although he gains the world, it cannot be said that he loses his soul, for he has none to lose. His only redeeming trait is his love for the daughter of an improvident farmer, but his pride and ambition prevent the marriage which might have humanized him, but which more likely would have spelt misery for her. Trant's success is a striking illustration of the old saw that if one is not careful he will be sure to get what he wants in this world.

"Sioux City" is a vigorous, interesting novel and shows an advance in both characterization and handling of material over Downing's first two novels; moreover the style is less frilly, more sharply masculine. There is less sentimentality, although the novelist is somewhat guilty in his portraits of the hero's father and the heroine's family. One wishes that the heroine were not such a paragon of sense and virtue, and that the Bret Harte touches in the reformed drunkard and gambler were less obvious, but the edge of the main story—that of Anthony Trant—is not blurred, and the novel comes to a forceful and poignant conclusion.

Richard A. Cordell is a professor in the Department of English and Speech at Purdue University.

Puritan and Hedonist

THE WIND OF CIRCUMSTANCE. By Harold Dearden. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1940. 437 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

EVEN if you are pretty fed-up with doctor books it will be a mistake to miss this one—that is if you still respond to a good yarn. For it is a mere accident of time that the author of this autobiography is a medical man. In another century he might have been a roving minstrel, or a swashbuckling privateer. Harold Dearden is one of those lucky persons who attract adventure as inevitably as a magnet draws filings. The lives of these hundred percent gland-functioning folk are always crowded with color, and when they are doubly blessed with the gift of expression they provide lively entertainment for us paler romantics. From childhood Dearden has pursued and been pursued by astonishing people. His father was the first, and he obviously conditioned his son in more ways than one. Drama and adventure were meat and drink to both, but while the elder sought his in devious ways, the younger found his in "the limitless capacity for unexpected behavior possessed by our fellow creatures"—in the quirks and irrelevancies, the pathos and dignity, the ironic obscenities, that rise to the surface when the wind of circumstance disturbs the top-soil. One glimpse of any of these and he was hot on its scent, and if his technique owed nothing to Freud, it had methods of its own for sounding human springs. So it was natural, that having decided to study medicine he should have chosen psychiatry for his specialty.

But that was later. First there was school, his boyish Puritanism, his emergence from a timid, book-loving youngster to a Cambridge athlete. And there was Anne, his first love. He fell in love with her at sight when he saw her performing very badly on a trapeze in a country fair, and his passion led him to challenge Ajax, the strong man, and then to join him and the caravan crew of performers for the weeks of his vacation. How he acquired Anne and the no less lovable terrier, Tim, is one of the most delightful episodes in the book. As a medical student and interne, adventure trots by his side in the friends he makes and the situations they plunge him into; he spends a vacation in London's slums the better to know the people and for the same reason earns his living by selling papers, unloading at the Limehouse docks, pushing a coster's cart, etc.; and he meets Kitty,

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the pretty lady, for whose conversion he renounces his inheritance, and whom eventually and disastrously he marries. After her death he goes to war for four years, and although he has little to tell us of battles, his pen sketches of the valiant Sergeant Hollis, of poor, frightened Archie carry complete conviction. Twice wounded in the head, he returns to London, almost faces bankruptcy, and is rescued financially when he comes to America and by an act of supersalesmanship puts over a fabulous deal. Home again he begins seriously to write; soon has two plays produced, and many stories to his credit. He fights threatened blindness, tries in vain to get into this present war, and ends his story with an amusing summing up of certain phases of the English character and the nation's reaction to Herr Hitler.

In the course of this crowded life Mr. Dearden achieves the attitude of a tolerant observer who has known both the Puritan's conscience and the reactions of the hedonist. Psychiatry and his instinctive kindliness have helped too, and he has learned to regard all human weakness—his own no less than others—with sympathy and tolerant humor. His candor is always engaging, if sometimes surprising. "I am as I am, and the world in which I live must take me or leave me." One suspects he is not seriously afraid the world will choose to "leave" him, that he enjoys saying that, that he really "likes himself" in big maleish fashion. But no one can blame him for that—least of all this reviewer who shares wholeheartedly in his liking.

Mr. Dearden has had a life full of picturesque incidents, and he has the ability to describe his experiences with vivacity. Some life and story-teller!

Mabel S. Ulrich is a graduate of Johns Hopkins Medical School and was for many years a practising physician.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Oliver Twist, by Dickens.
2. Tom Sawyer, by Mark Twain.
3. Penrod, by Booth Tarkington.
4. Peter Pan, by James Barrie.
5. Little Lord Fauntleroy, by Frances H. Burnett.
6. Kim, by Rudyard Kipling.
7. Gallagher, by Richard Harding Davis.
8. Wee Willie Winkie, by Rudyard Kipling.
9. Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain.
10. Little Black Sambo, by Helen Bannerman.

Wheat Farming in a Void

AN EMPIRE OF DUST. By Lawrence Svobida. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1940. 203 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PAUL B. SEARS

WHEN an area twice the size of France is opened up for farming with the backing of a great government and the promotion of business men, you can expect some very good people to be drawn in. And when such an area experiences, because of wrong use, complete and disastrous failure followed by vast migration, you can expect to have some trouble getting at the truth.

One of the good men who entered the Great Plains in 1929 to try wheat farming has written this book—a sober, honest chronicle of his own experiences. For nine years, despite a powerful body, skill as a farmer, and modern equipment, he had encountered crop failures from hail, drouth, wind, and drifting dust. He saw the Great Plains become the Dust Bowl.

"My only aim," he says, "is to help the reader understand what is taking place in the Great Plains region, and how serious it is; and, in some measure, to counteract the studied optimism of newspapers and chambers of commerce which wilfully withhold facts." In the reviewer's opinion, this is easily one of the most important books that has dealt with the Dust Bowl and its problems. Nowhere else can be found such penetrating and dispassionate comments, free from political bias, on the actual workings of governmental agencies in the attempt to deal with cumulative disaster to one-sixth of our national area. And what is said has bearing on problems far beyond the limits of the Great Plains.

The author sees no remedy but a universal adoption of good land use and management, backed by an enlightened public opinion. "Such public opinion must recognize the sovereign right of the states and the nation to regulate the use of the land by owners and tenant farmers so that it may be conserved as a national resource." This is the remark of a man who holds no resentment against the Supreme Court for declaring the first AAA unconstitutional. "If I had been a member of the Court, I would have felt compelled to concur with the majority decision, regardless of how I might have felt towards the needs of the farmers or any of the economic theories involved."

But the book is significant in other ways. In these times of neurotic writing and broadcasting, it is a novelty to see in what calm language a man can make you understand his despair at losing all he had labored for. And the same may be said for Mr. Svobida's account of his lone crises with dust sickness—pneumonia, I suppose.

Paul B. Sears, the author of "Deserts on the March," and "This is Our World," is professor of botany at Oberlin College.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 327)

W. M. THACKERAY

THE BOOK OF SNOBS

I felt charmed to read in the papers the other day a most veracious, puffing advertisement, headed "To College and Back for Five Shillings." . . . Now that Reform can go to College and back for five shillings, let her travel thither.

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Wanderings of the Norse

WESTWARD FROM VINLAND. By Hjalmar Holand. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1940. 354 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by EARL P. HANSON

IN 1898 a farmer at Kensington, Minnesota found a flat stone, clasped in the roots of a sizeable tree that was anywhere from twenty-five to ninety years old. (The age was not established at the time and could only be guessed at later.) It had some mysterious marks on it that were found to be runes. Runologists examined them (or copies of them), and found that the inscription said something about a number of Scandinavians being killed in that vicinity. They couldn't make it all out in those days, but they rejected the whole thing as a fraud, largely on linguistic grounds. It is important that they didn't make out the date on the stone, runic numerals being rare.

Nine years later Holand began to occupy himself with the stone, and has been working ever since to establish its authenticity, together with its consequent sweeping historical implications. He was not specifically trained for the job — he graduated from the University of Wisconsin, specializing in English literature—but with dogged determination he has done an impressive piece of work that is now causing the Kensington stone to be pretty widely accepted as genuine.

Holand's translation, which doesn't seem to be challenged by anybody, reads: [We are] 8 Goths (Swedes) and 22 Norwegians on [an] exploring-journey from Vinland through (or across) the West. We had a camp by [a lake with] 2 skerries one days-journey north from this stone. We were [out] and fished one day. After we came home [we] found 10 [of our] men red with blood and dead AV[e] M[aria] Save us from evil. We have 10 of (our party) by the sea to look after our ships (or ship) 14 days-journey from this island [in the] year [of our Lord] 1362.

Now that is a pretty weighty matter to find in Minnesota, and while there are still scholars who brand the whole business as an unmitigated fraud, there are others who have now come around to believing that the stone *may* be genuine, and still others who, largely because of Holand's efforts, now believe that it *is* genuine. Of the genuineness I am not qualified to speak with authority—though with so many scholars disagreeing I am entitled to my own opinion that Holand proved it without a doubt.

Of the fascination of Holand's book, as an exposition of a meticulously single-minded search, I *am* qualified to speak. He did a fine job that suffers only in being somewhat *too* fine, and too beautifully pat. I find myself in violent disagreement with the author on a number of questions of interpretation; but if I remove every one of those details as being not proven, or even as being false, I find that the main thesis still stands. To my mind the stone is genuine, convincingly proven so by Holand. It offers concrete evidence of what one might have expected—that the early Scandinavians roamed far inland on the American mainland after they had colonized Greenland, from where they couldn't have helped but stumble on the continent itself.

Aided by his own deciphering of the stone's all-important date, Holand marshalls his arguments to combat the early objections to authenticity on the grounds of linguistic peculiarities. They are thoroughly convincing. The stone's grammar and language aren't good; but, as one commentator points out, a modern forger who knew runes would be more likely to write grammatically than would a fourteenth-century Swedish sailor.

Then there is the valid argument of the stone's weathering and of the age of the tree that had held it clasped, to militate against the idea of its being a fraud perpetrated about 1870 (when the Kensington country wasn't yet settled). There is also the evidence of geologists. Today the country is not as described on the stone, but geological evidence shows that it probably was that way in the fourteenth century. There is also evidence from ethnologists, and a mass of fascinating minor corroboration. The turkey, for instance, is universally recognized to be an American bird, not introduced in Europe till it was brought from Mexico in 1530. How, then, did unmistakable turkey-cocks happen to be painted on the walls of the Cathedral of Schleswig, about 1280? Where is now the stone that Verendrye found near the Kensington site in the eighteenth century? Jesuit scholars who examined it at the time said it was covered with "Tatarian" inscriptions, which they couldn't read. But Tatarian inscriptions were very much like Norse runes. The Verendrye stone was shipped to Paris where it has been lost. Some day it may turn up and add another large chunk of evidence to that of the Kensington relic.

All that, and much more, forms a formidable set of arguments in favor of the Kensington stone's authenticity, and at the very least a fascinating story. This thing has body and substance; it is not just another mere "Lost Atlantis" job. Holand presents the results of his own detective-efforts in a setting of a general account of old Norse wanderings to America, as he gleans them from the Sagas.

Earl P. Hanson is an engineer and explorer who has done much exploratory research in Iceland.

Atlantic Monthly Press Announces $10,000 Novel Prize Winner

The 1940 Atlantic Novel Prize of $10,000 has been awarded to Mrs. Antonina Riasanovsky of Eugene, Oregon for her novel called "The Family." It is not a regional novel but the story of an exiled White Russian family composed of brave and amusing people set against the background of Tientsin, China, where they have fled. The author is herself a White Russian and lived in Tientsin after she was forced to leave her native country. She has been living in the United States since 1938 and took out her first papers immediately. This is her first novel and will be brought out by Little, Brown & Co. next September. The quality of manuscripts submitted in this year's contest was such that the judges had to deliberate much longer than usual before making a final decision.

Drawing by Edward Shenton

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THE POET AS TRAVELER

(*Continued from page 7*)

"To the Explorers." Only a poet—sensitive yet unflinching—could have written them.

Although Mr. Davison has recently become an American citizen, his collected verse is parochially English. Here are records of the poet's undergraduate days at Cambridge University twenty years ago, his association with Jack (later Sir John) Collings Squire, bucolic lines about demobilization in 1919, and a salute to the King and Queen riding by St. Clement's Danes on an April morning. The mélange of subject matter and style suggests an entire Georgian anthology. "Get Ready to Die," for example, recalls Harold Monro's whimsically bizarre personifications of household furniture and "the tap's eternal leak"; "Colin Clout's Come Home Again" has the accent of Robert Graves's brisk and early rusticities; "Labrador" reminds one of W. J. Turner's romantic allusions to Chimborazo and Cotopaxi; "Woman's Song," though seemingly a later poem, has the same blood-conscious theme, the dark sexual undertone, and almost the same setting, as D. H. Lawrence's "A Youth Mowing," although Lawrence's poem is in gnarled dialect and Mr. Davison's is in straight poetic diction.

It is Mr. Davison's manner rather than his material which makes his verse seem dated. Perhaps it is the country's change in taste, the fiercer tempo, the exacerbated tension, rather than Mr. Davison's change of scene, which is to blame. Many of his lines are gracefully turned and skilfully ballanced; most of them are intelligently restrained, cool without being frigid, sensitive without being precious. Perhaps it is not the poet's fault that they read like indefinite anachronisms.

Mr. MacIntyre, versatile Californian, can do almost anything. He can whisk you across two continents without losing an anapest; he can turn a sonnet on its head, casually displacing octave and sestet; he can toss off a deft lyric with the most modern twist of suspension, assonance, and dissonance. In these eighty-seven pages he is almost incredibly industrious; no poetic globe-trotter has ever undertaken the Grand Tour with more celerity and aplomb. Here, in swift stereoscopic effects, are rhymed snapshots of the flea market in Paris, slow oxen in Syracuse (Sicily, not N. Y.), autumn in Arles, the drapers' market in Tunis, chrysanthemums in Covent Garden, wild swans on the Bodensee, the torture-chamber in Nuremberg, the Winged Victory in the Louvre, the plaster dog in the small museum at Pompeii, a nightclub in Leipzig, a pair of Lesbians out of Sappho via Pierre Louys, a bedouin dance in Nefta, a traditional prostitute in Montparnasse, the temple of Juno in Girgenti, the Gothic spires of Cologne, an obscene advertisement and an eternal symbol in Herculaneum. . . . They are all here, all the places, all the showpieces, all the poetic properties. All that is missing is the author.

But Mr. MacIntyre, though almost invisible, is not altogether absent. Hints of his presence may be found in the way he uses his camera eye: the angle shots, the adroit disposition of shadows, the unflattering portraits and wry disposals. "These poems," says the jacket, "are by a writer who has achieved a reputation in America. They are mostly about places, and things seen, in Europe." Perhaps Mr. MacIntyre will reveal himself more adequately when, having acquired a reputation in Europe, he writes about places, and things which he has seen in America.

THE FIGHTING DECADE

(*Continued from page 5*)

joined hands in *The Saturday Review of Literature*. By this time there were sharp literary as well as political divisions on the left, and Edmund Wilson, James T. Farrell, and others conducted literary skirmishes against the Communists and their united front.

IT is a mistake to think that no writers were radicals in the twenties. On the contrary, when the *New Masses* was started in 1926, the founders had no difficulty in securing a distinguished list of poets and novelists to act as contributing editors. But the radicalism of most of these writers found no practical and little literary expression.

What the depression did, of course, was to shift the focus, and few writers were unaffected. You miss the point if you think of the thirties as a period in which a handful of extreme radicals were engaged in battling over dogma. On the contrary, the turmoil of the decade affected almost every writer. Dreiser and Anderson wrote belligerently on political topics in the early thirties. Sinclair Lewis was moved to write one novel against fascism and one against communism. H. L. Mencken, without altering his philosophy, paid more attention to politics, and revealed himself to the generation that had admired him, now mostly turned radical, as an ally of the Liberty League. No one could be surprised when Carl Sandburg wrote "The People, Yes," for it grew out of everything he had done before, but it was startling to read political poems by Robert Frost and Robinson Jeffers. Archibald MacLeish, a sincere and puzzled searcher for truth, found himself led now to the right and now to the left. Ernest Hemingway, who believed that his post-war disillusionment had inoculated him against any kind of social enthusiasm, saw enough in Spain to make him a crusader.

Drawing by Hugo Gellert

John Dos Passos could scarcely have written "U.S.A." before 1929.

What happened in the thirties was something much more important than the debates over Stalin and Trotsky or the discussions of proletarian literature, for a change was taking place in the consciousness of American writers. The arguments were merely symptoms of the change, and the left authors were not circumscribed by the theories they defended. There were novelists, as I have said, who accepted formulae, but probably they were third-rate novelists to begin with. There were novelists led by political convictions who ventured into depths in which their knowledge and insight could not sustain them, and they suffered accordingly. But on the whole left literature was always independent of political and critical dogmas, and that was its strength. Such writers as John Dos Passos, Josephine Herbst, James T. Farrell, and John Steinbeck learned something from Marxist theory and Communist practice, but they

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knew how to assimilate what they learned. Such novels as Fielding Burke's "Call Home the Heart," Robert Cantwell's "Land of Plenty," Albert Halper's "The Foundry," and Thomas Bell's "All Brides Are Beautiful" are novels of American life, not novels of party struggle. In the past year two novels, John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" and Richard Wright's "Native Son," have broken out of the circle of literary debate and into the consciousness of hundreds of thousands of Americans. The many readers of these novels have, of course, many and mixed motives; they are not radicals because they read a radical book; but that such readers can be touched is proof that the authors have transcended sectarianism.

The left writers have been the hopeful and vital writers of the thirties. I do not deny that much great literature has grown out of pessimism, but the pessimism of the twenties was superficial, febrile, and altogether too easy, and the triumph over it was a step towards maturity. I know that some of the optimism of the thirties was also too easy, but there was also hopefulness of a profounder sort, and, to turn for a moment to another literature, Malraux has demonstrated that belief in and devotion to social betterment can co-exist with an intensely tragic sense of life. What literature cannot survive is pessimism as a pose, as a form of sophistication and snobbishness, or as an excuse for inertia, and from these evils radicalism delivered its adherents. For the first time in many decades America has had a serious literature that knew when to affirm as well as when to deny.

THE decade has ended, and not merely because we are in the forties. As the epoch began with the collapse of the stock market, so it ended with the Soviet-Nazi pact and the outbreak of the war. On the political level the effect of these and subsequent events is obvious: the literary united front has disappeared; not only many of its new recruits but also some of its veterans have left the Communist Party; there has been a sharp revulsion against the Soviet Union. Almost overnight the Communist Party lost the position of intellectual prestige it had held for eight years, and its adherents and fellow-travelers are scattered in every direction. Though new groupings are now discernible, there was nothing but chaos for ten months after the pact, aggravated by the tangled issues of the Second World War.

There has been equal confusion in criticism. The position of the Communist Party has changed, and those who remain loyal to it are still struggling to adjust themselves to the new situation. Of those who have abandoned it, some cling to what they consider orthodox Marxism, others attempt revision, others desert Marx altogether. No one stands quite where he stood a year ago, and no two persons stand together.

What effect will this have on American literature? Are we going to go back to the late twenties and pick up the paths that were then being followed? There are signs of such an attempt. Last April Louise Bogan, jubilantly seeking the destruction of the left's prestige, which she had hated for a decade, wrote in the *Nation* "The Defense of Belles-Lettres." She talked of "the purely formal and delight-giving manifestations" of language, "pure writing," "disinterested comment," "detached minds." "Will the ivory tower," she asked, "continue to be represented as a coward's refuge?"

More significant is the confusion of such writers as W. H. Auden, Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, and Archibald MacLeish. They seek, as we all must do, to understand the political mistakes that we have made, and much of what they say is sound. But they seem to be driven by psychological forces that they cannot quite bring into the open. What are they being driven to? Mysticism is a vague word, but there can be no sharp definition of what is obviously so hazy in their own minds. Could there be here, not a new humanism but a substitute for the old? One thing is clear: if their state of mind is at all common, and I think it is, some sort of aristocratic, authoritarian doctrine is going to grow in influence among the intellectuals. These men may not succumb to it, but others will.

I think, then, that both estheticism and mysticism will be more important in the forties than they were in the thirties. The forms they take will depend on the character of the decade. If, as seems almost certain, the decade is marked by militarism, if not war, by rapid and far-reaching economic changes, by intense external and internal struggles, they will be modes of retreat, efforts towards bare survival. They will not have the belligerent quality of the estheticism and humanism of the late twenties, but will be negative and defensive. They may have political implications, essentially fascist, but for most adherents they will be above all else anti-political, an escape from politics.

How much such tendencies may grow I do not know, but I doubt that they will ever be dominant. As I have said, the earlier estheticism and humanism were trying to utilize a favorable economic situation. The new doctrines will be an adjustment to an unfavorable situation, and this same situation will merely be a continuation of what has existed in the thirties. The fundamental conditions, in other words, that created the left literature of the thirties will not be done away with but, in all probability, will be aggravated. It is true that left writers, sallying forth to destroy the evils they saw, have met with defeat, and this defeat came not so much from the strength of the enemy, which they recognized, as from their own weakness, of which they were not conscious. The setback will undoubtedly discourage some of them, sending them, temporarily or permanently, into the ranks of the esthetics and mystics. But not all of them will be so affected, and there are always younger writers coming along, facing the old evils with new and untarnished courage. They and their older allies will build again, profiting from the mistakes that have been made, not overwhelmed by them.

That is where the strength of the literature I have been talking about lies. It is not invalidated by the collapse of a political dogma or the revision of critical theories. If a sound American radical movement is built, firmly rooted in national traditions, free from reliance on doctrinal orthodoxy, it will recognize this literature as its own.

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"Sacred Temple of Love"

MODERN MARRIAGE. A Symposium. Edited by Moses Jung. New York: F. S. Crofts & Co. 1940. 420 *pp., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by V. F. CALVERTON

IN the light of Bertrand Russell's recent difficulties regarding morality and the institution of marriage, any book on marriage today acquires added interest and challenge. What Russell said about marriage, despite Judge McGeehan's conviction to the contrary, was more sane and sensible than nine-tenths of what the pundits have written, who have tried to examine it under a moral microscope.

This book, which is a symposium, suffers from being written by puritanic pundits, men and women who seek to be scientific but seldom succeed in being more than moralistic. What made Judge McGeehan and his ilk so opposed to Russell was not only because of what the English philosopher said but also because of how he said it. Russell is one of the few clever, witty, brilliant writers of today, and when he writes of marriage he does it as the Greeks and Romans did, with a sense of humor as well as proportion, and with a candor and objectivity that terrify the sanctimonious.

This book, "Modern Marriage," is a pious addition to the Eddie Guest school of thought. It is a book of polyannistic platitudes and exasperating sentimentalities. Its various contributors—most of them are professors from the University of Iowa from which place the editor also hails—constantly sigh about "the sacred temple of love," the "weeds that cannot flourish in the garden of love," that "human love and divine love should not be separated," that "the love of God is made incarnate in family relations," that "sex is a gift of God" and one of them advises that "if cares have infested the day, why should you not become an Abelard and Heloise to forget them together," and then they make such original discoveries as that "health is an important consideration in marriage," "that marriage is a biosocial enterprise," that there are three simple rules to insure family success: "(1) Live within your income. (2) Keep out of debt. (3) Put something aside for a rainy day."

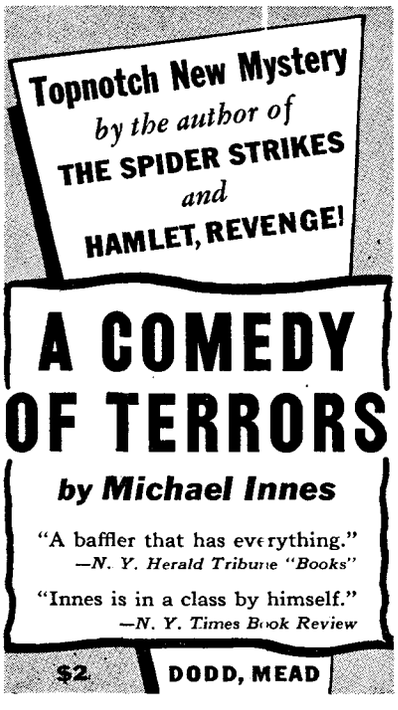
There is not an untrue statement in the book but at the same time not an original idea, not an original suggestion, not an original illation in it. It is simply a compilation of the obvious, a collection of intellectual clichés. The authors may argue that since their book is devised mainly for students, although it really pretends to more, it is not supposed to be original. But it is my contention that students deserve more than the platitudinous, the trite, the morally effete. When a writer in the book can state without qualification or blush that "an abortion is just as much murder as if the pregnancy had been permitted to go to full-term and the resulting child had been strangled," it is pretty clear that the moral outlook of the symposium is not markedly progressive.

The book is made up of a diversity of essays, ranging from one on Family Disorganization by Grace E. Chaffee, one on Marriage and Mental Hygiene by John M. Dorsey, one on the Aesthetics of Marriage by Carl E. Seashore and his wife Roberta, one on the Biological and Eugenical Background of the Family by W. R. B. Robertson, one on A Religious Approach to Marriage by Leland Foster Wood, one on Religious Education in the Home by Moses Jung, the editor of the volume, one on Child Welfare by George D. Stoddard, and one on Mental Hygiene and Child Welfare by Harold H. Anderson. There are a handful of other essays but these are the ones that stand out best and give the volume its conservative character.

What makes the book ineffective is that it dodges by its sweetness and light approach all the major problems which beset the marital (Orson Welles still prefers to call it the "martial") institution today. The authors refuse to face the changes that have occurred among the young people of today, or if they do not refuse it they gloze over it. What has happened to alter that situation is change not on the part of man but on the part of woman. So far as men is concerned, he would have preferred to cling to his double, triple, quadruple, and quintuple standard of morality. The development of the new woman, however, altered all that; and, since woman's emergence into a stage of political, educational, economic, and moral maturity, she has begun to have a say in what's what and why. Having realized, after all, that she is not just a pawn in man's hands but is a being in her own right, she has learned how to play the game of sex and marriage in man's way and not in mother's way, which has been the cause of so much of our present moral and marital confusion.

Such realities the authors of this volume either ignore or evade. They are too interested in the pretty-pretty picture of marriage to come to grips with its less alluring aspects. It is not so much that they deny them but that they carefully soft-pedal all discussion of them.

V. F. Calverton, a lecturer on sociology and history, is the author of "The Bankruptcy of Marriage" and a number of other books.



The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE MAN WITH THE CRIMSON BOX *Harry Stephen Keeler* (Dutton: $2.)	Unearthing of skull brings terror to convict about to be released and starts long and confusing chain of criminal events.	Author up to all his old tricks, which, in spite of their exasperating qualities, bear watching by connoisseurs of deductive chronicles.	Curious
THE CORPSE WITH KNEE ACTION *B. T. Maylon* (Phoenix: $2.)	California newspaperman in quest of story encounters four gory killings and solves ten-year-old crime to boot.	Rather well worked-up surprise ending doesn't make up for completely improbable melodrama of earlier chapters.	Blood-'n-thunder
AS GOOD AS MURDERED *James O'Hanlon* (Random House: $2.)	Jason Cordry, writer, offers to turn a Hollywood suicide into murder, with himself as the murderer. He is too successful.	Hocus-pocus, including impersonations and trial at which Cordry is his own attorney, a little too much for serious acceptance. But here it is summer!	Slap-happy

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They Flew for the Army

UP AND AT EM. By Harold Hartney. New York: Stackpole Sons. 1940. 333 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MAJOR L. H. NASON

THIS is a fine book. It is about fighting in the air in the last war, but it might be about fighting in the air in this war. It is not just another book about flier's adventures in the air and in bed, but a well written account by a veteran air commander, Lieutenant Colonel Harold Hartney. Many of the men he writes of are now national and international figures,—Captains Nordhoff and Hall, authors of "Mutiny on the Bounty," Major Kenneth Littauer, fiction editor of *Collier's* of whom the author says, "one of the really great officers of the American Air Service and one of the few actual fliers given high command." I know these three men. Harold Buckley I met after the war. He got the French government to give me back an automobile they had seized. Norman Archibald and "Bugs" Raymond belong to my post of the American Legion. So that I can say that the material in this book is authentic.

In clear, simple, narrative style the story is told of Colonel Hartney's service as a flier from the time he enlisted in the Canadian Forces in 1915 up to the armistice. It is a unique book of war-time aviation experience, because, since the author had his wife in England with him, no chapters in the volume are devoted to accounts of night-flying.

Major Hartney, as I said, being interested only in fighting, writes only about that, not dramatically, because the simple recital of combat is dramatic enough in itself. Those who go into hysterics in describing battle raise doubts as the authenticity of their combat experience. The author shoots down Germans and tells about it as a matter of fact, which it was. He is shot down himself, and beyond admitting that it was a pretty hair-raising experience, goes on to say that he got a leave out of it, and could go home to his family, so maybe the Germans did him a favor after all.

I inquired of one who served in the First Pursuit Group what his opinion was of Colonel Hartney as an officer.

"He always had more planes on the line than his group needed," was the answer. "You know usually it's the other way 'round."

The suggestions therefore, with which Colonel Hartney sprinkle the book, can safely and profitably be read by those who have flying ambitions, and ought to be by those who have ambition to command those fliers.

It is delightful to read something about war by a qualified soldier, and not some erratic draft dodger seeking an outlet for his spitefulness. This book delighted me except in one spot. The author describes the last great German offensive, July 15, 1918. "It was the ultimate of frenzied excitement. Allied troops of all kinds were rushing by us in both directions, French going back on relief, waves of Americans going forward. It was the climax of the war." If it was the climax of the war, what were the French being relieved for?

Another war is in progress, and we are being urged to take part. Let us have no delusions then, about the behavior of the participants in the last one.

Major Leonard H. Nason, cited for "gallantry in action" in 1918, *is the author among numerous books of "Chevrons" and "Three Lights from a Match."*

The Case for Reason

THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION. By Cecil Roth. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1940. 420 *pp., with index.* $2.

Reviewed by ABRAM L. SACHAR

IN the face of the tragic news from abroad, a volume which discusses Jewish contributions to civilization has a kind of pathetic interest. For American readers, however, the book may still have practical value. Soon, very soon, an avalanche of anti-Semitic agitation will overwhelm the Western hemisphere. The triumphant Nazis abroad will turn their attention to America, and as always, will attempt to utilize racial bigotry to confuse and demoralize American public opinion. The thin driblets of anti-Semitism which, since 1933, have come through the sluices of Bundist zeal, will swell to torrents as the floodgates of German propaganda are opened wide.

It will be useful to have Dr. Roth's volume at hand. For it summarizes, with a wealth of research, and in superbly lucid style, the rich contribution to the fabric of civilized life, of a little people whose numbers are less than one percent of the population of the Western world. Dr. Roth discusses the part played by the Hebrews—Moses, the Prophets, and the rabbis,—in building the basic religious values which have transformed Christianity and Islam as well as Judaism. There are interesting chapters which describe Jewish participation in the development of art and science, social ethics, economic and political institutions. Those who read will be impressed with the influence of the Old Testament as a respected sanction for the American Revolution, an influence once summarized aptly by the British historian, Lecky, who said: "Hebraic mortar cemented the foundations of the Republic." Indeed, the first seal used by the young American nation depicted the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea and had the motto: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

Of course these facts will have very little bearing on the course of events. Historians like Dr. Roth write with intelligence and sensitiveness, and anti-Semitism is not abashed or circumvented by either. Demagogues and racketeers do not change their tune when their lies are exposed. They cynically create new ones. And the hungry, the unemployed, the weary, and the heavy-laden, are usually desperate enough to listen uncritically to Pied Pipers who promise them short-cuts to security.

But Dr. Roth's volume can bolster the morale of the Jews who begin to lose faith in themselves as the anti-Semitic filth engulfs them. They begin to wonder if the Nazis may not be right; after all, the attack is almost universal; can a whole world be wrong? It can also bring home again to decent honorable Christians that anti-Semitism is not merely an attack upon Jews. It is an attack upon the Renaissance man, upon the Christian spirit which also perceives the ideal world in terms of human significance and ethical supremacy.

Abram L. Sachar is the author of "Sufferance is the Badge."

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THE NEW BOOKS

Biography

PRESS PASS. By Kathleen Ann Smallzried. Dutton. 1940. $3.

"So you want to be a reporter," said a New York editor to his son. "Then get out of New York and go to the Middle West and see life." This book by Miss Smallzried is an account of that life with emphasis on the rough edges and close to the ground goings-on. She pretty frankly tells how a high school graduate with more than ordinary amount of ability becomes a reporter without driving her editor-trainer into anything more than strong language. But it is a lively session and one that will give many a diploma holder a vivid idea of the physical endurance necessary for the reporter's job. But there is the fun of it—and Miss Smallzried puts it down. The famous people she interviewed and what they said and did that did not always get into newspaper print. The book is full of the lingo of journalism and definitions of what is meant by requests from the city editor for straight news, feature stories, interviews, obituaries, human interest, sports by telephone and telegraph, and is splashed with local color galore. All this happened in South Bend, Indiana, the home town of Notre Dame University and Knute Rockne. So football pervaded the city and received expert attention from Miss Smallzried when she was not engaged in reporting testimony at a good murder. She ran the whole gamut. After a search of hotel kitchens, laundries, and policemen's traffic boxes she went to the foundry room of a plow manufacturing concern where heat and humidity climbed to a fantastic height and workmen put on sweaters when they went outdoors where the thermometer registered 104°. She tells it all—even to the pet profanity of the shop and the number of brandies downed upon occasions of reporting stress. "If you can live through that," said the New York editor to his son, "then you can come back and ask for a job."

E. S.

FIRST PORT OF CALL. By Elizabeth Jordan. Appleton-Century. 1940. 265 *pp.* $2.

One way of getting around the idea of death is to argue that there is a plan to it, that the right people are taken and the right ones saved, and that there is a sort of balance sheet to settle it when the time comes. Mr. Wilder argued so when he threw his people from a bridge, and there have been many such studies before and after. Miss Jordan's people all go down together in a plane crash, and awake to find themselves in a sort of Shangri-La, where mysterious personages tip-toe about and show them flash-backs of their entire lives, all in the midst of sumptuous luxury. We soon discover those who do not deserve to return to life, or do not need to, with the suggestion that some virtues are to be rewarded, some sins washed clean in service. Five are saved out of thirteen. It must be admitted that this conception has long ago had whatever was in it wrung out of it, and in this present instance we find, as soon as the novelty has worn off, that none of the thirteen is interesting enough to give to his saving or damnation any significance.

N. L. R.

SPRING OFFENSIVE. By Herbert Clyde Lewis. Viking. 1940. 223 *pp.* $2.

For its own sake, this slender novel should have made its appearance well before the beginning of the actual Spring Offensive. In the teeth of the real thing, the reflections on war of a fictitious young American volunteer, caught between the Maginot and Siegfried lines on the day of the launching of the Blitzkrieg, are not very impelling, especially in view of his having ventured into no-man's land in the first place in order to plant sweet peas among the anti-tank fortifications. If the reader finds this intention pleasing, the chances are that he will like the book. Otherwise, he is apt to grow morose as Winston whimsically and querulously reviews the circumstances that brought him to his present pass. (He is lying in a shell-hole with a sprained ankle and a shoulder wound under a barrage from both sides.) In his hour of need, everyone had let him down—friend, boss, and girl. America had let him down.

We are taken back to Winston's home in Indiana, where those who knew him are reminded of his existence by the news of the offensive—first with qualms of conscience, then with definite resentment at the intrusion upon their preoccupations when word arrives of the complete annihilation of his division. But Winston has not yet been killed. His end comes when a panic-stricken German bayonets him in the stomach during an advance, and is even then sufficiently protracted to allow him to ponder at length the meaning of a war in which machine-guns fire three hundred shots a minute. In his mind he sees the legions of American youth following him to take part in a war to breed future wars—all because America has not lived up to its promise, because "they all distrusted the future of America." As he dies, he sees a vision of the war that remains to be fought at home, in which the dispossessed "would fight only to make America smile on them," to "take what belonged to them from the start."

The book (not unlike this review) is a supreme piece of over-simplification. It is an expression—perhaps one of the last—of the dream-world in which American hopefuls have been living, confident that the complex realities that face us are reducible to simplicity if only our reasoning is sufficiently amiable.

C. O., Jr.

MASKS AND FACES. By Phyllis Bottome. Houghton Mifflin. 1940. 277 *pp.* $2.50.

This collection of twenty short narratives which have appeared in periodicals during the past six years, will probably neither add to nor detract from Miss Bottome's high reputation as a skillful story-teller and shrewd psychologist. Some of the sketches seem to be fashioned from material left over from her novels (a meritorious economy); some appear to be derived from the author's experience in social work in Vienna, housekeeping in a Tyrolean chalet, childhood in an English vicarage, convalescence in a Swiss sanitarium, residence on the Riviera, etc. A few of the brief stories are more imaginative, particularly those dealing with animals—horses, lions, bulls—and "The Outsider," a tense study of hero-worship and jealousy in a Hungarian cloister.

It is trite to mention Miss Bottome's cosmopolitanism and versatility, but her first-hand knowledge of America, France, Austria, England, Switzerland, and Italy, her sympathetic understanding of their peoples, her long study of abnormal psychology, her fa-

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miliarity with artistic, professional, and diplomatic circles in various European capitals provide her with more rich material than most writers of fiction possess. "Masks and Faces" has goodly variety: humor, tragedy, pathos, satire, melodrama, brittle character study. The settings range from Moscow and Vienna to Hollywood and the California desert.

The best of its twenty tales are the character studies, especially those told from the inside. "The Cup of Alteration," which purports to be a letter written by Bernhardt shortly before her death, reveals the tragedienne's *quand même* philosophy of life and includes enchanting comments on her rivals Duse and Ellen Terry and on various royal lovers. "A Splendid Fellow" is a devastating portrait of Meredith's egoist in a "realistic" age. "The Strangle-hold" retells the story of "The Silver Cord" with finesse and subtlety, and deftly makes the mother a credible, charming monster. In "A Choice of Evils," a gay murder yarn, a long-suffering woman resolutely destroys her mother when necessity demands. Two or three of the tales are trivial, but through most runs a sharp perception of the eccentricities and superstitions of modern life and the deeper permanencies of human nature.

R. A. C.

Fiction

REHEARSAL. By Fredericka Faxon. Coward McCann. 1940. 453 *pp.* $2.50.

This story of Amy Braide, is a long "Strange Interlude" with Amy somewhat less neurotic than Nina Leeds, but more rapacious—after all, three men and a son gave Nina plenty to think aloud about—and far less honest with herself. The daughter of an aristocrat who had degenerated into a drunken quarryman, and a faded, dull woman fifteen years his senior, Amy started life in a dreary, graceless home. Racked by an abortive love affair and the death of her parents, she is rescued from despair by a well-to-do family friend, who adopts her. Midway through the novel she marries a thin-blooded aristocrat, whose arrogant, domineering sister loathes and persecutes the upstart Amy. It is as though young Nina Leeds had married poor old Charlie and found herself unable to snip the silver cord.

So far so good, for the first half of "Rehearsal" is firmly written and absorbing. It starts in the taut, objective manner of George Moore and the French naturalists of half a century ago, and is deeply moving because the reader is persuaded that it was deeply felt. Perhaps Amy, like Nina, is never quite credible, but we glimpse those inner fires that threaten to consume her. The second half of the book is less impressive. Abandoning what Flaubert calls "methodical relentlessness and precision," the author leaves the grim impassivity of naturalism and proceeds over strange detours through Ouidaland and adjacent parts. The Esther Waters who seemed destined to grow into a Thérèse Raquin softens into La Dame aux Camélias. A sweeping novel that begins grandly and bravely like "Hilda Lessway's" ends almost banally like "The Rosary."

Although "Rehearsal" tells an American story it is curiously European. The village with its hunting set, the gentlemen-farmers, the obliging mother hunting a mistress for her son, the place names—one has difficulty in assigning the novel its proper local habitation. But although "Rehearsal" is an undisciplined novel, it contains enough good things to merit the hackneyed but useful "promising."

R. A. C.

International

MY FINNISH DIARY. By Sir Walter Citrine. Penguin. 1940. 192 *pp.* 25 *cents.*

Last January, Sir Walter Citrine, Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, headed a delegation of three which went to Finland for ten days "to examine the situation on the spot" and ascertain precisely how guilty the Soviet government of the proletariat had been in "using the same methods as the Nazi power against which the British working class is united in the war now raging." The mission also wanted to demonstrate "the sympathy and esteem in which the Finnish people were held by the British Labor Movement."

The result of that visit is "My Finnish Diary," which may have some documentary value, but is a pretty tasteless mess of tripe, particularly when compared with the reportorial efforts of the professional newspaper men who covered that show.

Sir Walter records minutely his chats with soldiers, workers, journalists, and "prominent personalities"; his reactions to the sight of demolished Finnish communities and a threatened air raid upon his Mission; his missionary work to persuade Finnish employers to "travel the well-trodden road of collective bargaining, and to encourage their people to join the Trade Unions"—and this in a country where for years labor has been contented and well protected!

Miscellaneous

GOOD HEALTH AND BAD MEDICINE. By Harold Aaron, M.D. McBride. 1940. 328 *pp., with index.* $3.

This book has been written with a double purpose; first to offset "the large amount of misinformation, deception or falsehood which drug, food, and cosmetic advertising instills into the public" and second to serve as "a compendium of common ailments and their treatment, to help the family decide when a physician's help is nec-

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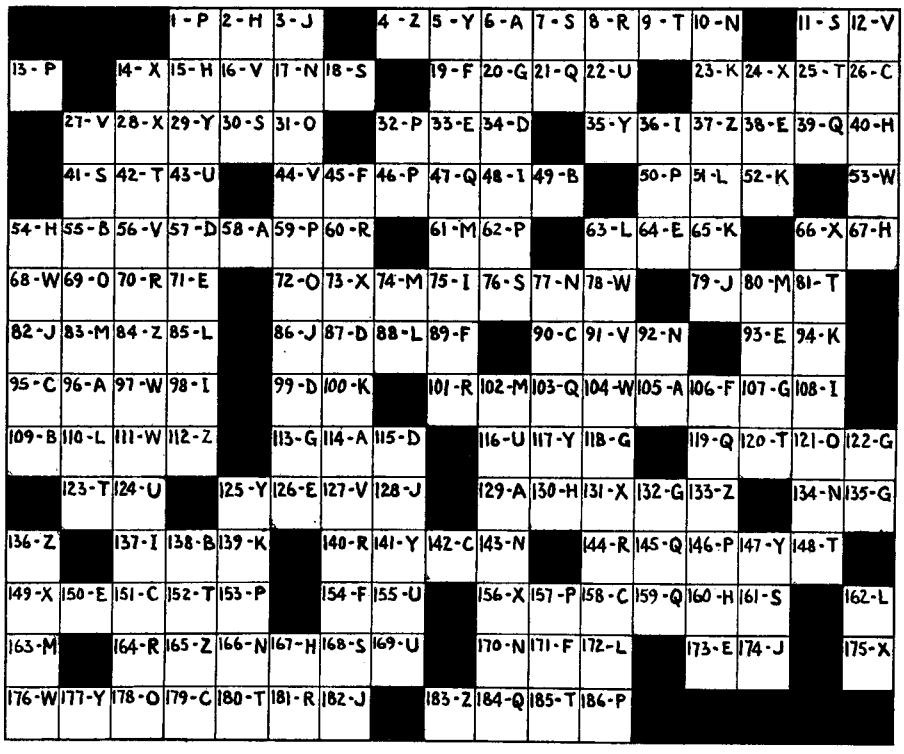
(*Continued to next page*)

Double-Crostics: No. 328

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 14 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Rossini and Mozart hero.

B. Tail-end.

C. Of a "marriage," by George Meredith.

D. Scent or savor of cooking.

E. Pertaining to linguistic Indian family of C. and S. A.

F. Greek lyric poet (B. C. 6th Cent.)

G. Yellow for coloring and flavoring foods.

H. North Carolina cape.

I. Fairy hero of a Von Weber opera.

J. Clive victory in India (1757).

K. Applied to a cut place of a tree.

L. Penetrating.

M. Legalism.

N. Violently noisy (colloq.) (comp.)

O. Character in "Hamlet."

P. Political fable by Bacon (2 wds.)

Q. Applied to shells with whorls of high conical spirals.

R. Revolutionary War mercenaries.

S. Designated.

T. Good-for-nothing (sb., comp.)

U. Goddess of the vernal equinox (Anglo-Saxon).

V. Famous English letter-writer (1717-97).

W. Puts new cover on a book.

X. Meddlesome.

Y. Surpasses in vehement crying.

Z. Gave special prominence to.

WORDS

6	105	58	96	129	114							
55	138	49	109									
90	95	151	179	158	142	26						
57	87	34	99	115								
38	64	126	93	71	150	173	33					
45	154	19	106	171	89							
132	107	113	122	118	20	135						
2	67	54	167	160	15	130	40					
48	75	98	36	137	108							
86	128	79	182	174	3	82						
23	65	139	100	94	52							
110	51	63	85	162	88	172						
80	83	74	61	163	102							
10	92	166	17	170	134	77	143					
121	31	69	178	72								
157	186	13	32	59	153	50	62	1	146	46		
159	21	184	119	39	145	103	47					
60	8	140	144	70	101	181	164					
18	11	7	76	30	41	168	161					
25	42	180	9	81	120	123	185	152	148			
155	116	169	43	22	124							
44	16	91	27	12	127	56						
104	78	68	176	111	97	53						
28	66	14	24	175	131	73	156	149				
141	117	177	35	5	125	147	29					
183	112	37	165	84	4	133	136					

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 23)

I WILL PAY $40 cash for used, motor lawn-mower. Rush particulars. Box 923-D.

RANDOM NOTES of Manhattanite who is putting off doing a little writing would be a pleasure to Lois Anne.

POET-CRITIC; Wanted 100% classicist, interested and qualified to revive early American classic of high recognized merit —**not "commercial."** HAnover 2-1931.

"CLEOPATRA, bored by Caesars, awaits Antony."

ENGLISHMAN (unfit war service), wide and expert writing experience, especially biography, wishes contribute personality articles on prominent British politicians, artists, literary men to American journals. Details, specimens. Address: British Monomarks / CHCN, London, W. C. 1., England.

VACATION IN NEW ENGLAND HILLS. Restful atmosphere near interesting towns. Best of food. Transportation from your door if desired. Box 924-D.

At SHATTUCK INN nested 'neath Monadnock Mountain . . . outdoor sports, indoor comfort, tempting meals, complete relaxation fill vacation days with contentment. Selected clientele. For Booklet write G. L. Austermann, Jaffrey, N. H.

IS THERE A YOUNG BUSINESS MAN, quiet tastes, who wants sunny room, bath, bachelor's apartment Forest Hills? Large library; fine air, good views; tennis. Two blocks 8th Avenue Subway. References exchanged. Box 895-D.

QUIET COUNTRY HOME can accommodate two or three ladies by the week or month. Near pool—riding academy. $12.00 weekly. Box 167, R.F.D. 0, Fairfield, Connecticut.

OLD UPSTATE HOME wants congenial guests. No social activities, just lawns, gardens, woods and fields. Cool spacious rooms, fireplaces.
Country table, reasonable rates. Also 2 room camp. Swimming, golf ten miles. Will arrange trips, Thousand Islands, Western Adirondacks—"Florissant," Lyons Falls, N. Y.

NANTUCKET—Two unusual places; historic estate 200 years old in town; smaller house 150 years old in Polpis; rent or sale; HAnover 2-1931.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY 5-room stone house; long occupied by distinguished writer. Orange County, 68 miles from New York; fireplace, swinging crane, Dutch oven, roofed terrace, grape arbor, shade trees, new orchard, about 2 acres fertile soil; beautiful views; secluded, accessible, perfect condition, low taxes; completely furnished; telephone; electricity available; ideal for creative work. Sacrifice $3,000 for immediate sale. Box 926 D.

WRITER-EDITOR (male—36, well known and traveled, is willing to devote summer to your literary endeavors Proposition must be worthy. Box 926-D.

PHOTOGRAPER caresses candid snapshots into lovely salon portraits. Box 888-D.

A" RIVERTON, VERMONT. On-top-a Green Mountain. A vacation natural—if you like private homes. Ten guest limit. Tennis, swimming, riding Low tariff. Only restriction—Congeniality. Interview necessary. Telephone, Ashland 4-8580. Ask for Miller.

EDELWEISS RANCH, Wilson, Wyoming offers all ranch activities in a private congenial atmosphere. Beautifully located in famous Jackson Hole. Accommodating only seven guests. Rates with bath $4.50 a day. William Mueller.

NEW ENGLAND WOMAN, 40, enjoys writing letters, interested in everything, would welcome correspondence with other Saturday Review readers. Box 930-D.

WRITERS (one or two): Sincere Personal Assistance. Mountain lakefront cottage. Box 929-D.

WRITER—TRANSLATOR, engaged in normal times in translation of American authors for Swiss and French publishers and agency work, is eager for literary work, translations or teaching. First-class references. Box 928-D.

TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS

Amherst Town

The lecturer came to Amherst Town
  Complete with phrase and note.
He thrilled the world of cap and gown
  But Emily only wrote.

The lecturer came to Amherst Town
  And promptly saint and sinner
Vied to have him sitting down
  To grace a festive dinner.

The lecturer now is but a name,
  His steps are washed away.
Silent still, in the Hall of Fame
  Emily rests this day.

VIRGINIA SCOTT MINER.

★ ★

OLD PENSIVE has vaguely heard there is a kind of dog-whistle which is inaudible to all except the dog himself. ☞Q. understands this perfectly; he himself sometimes hears clairaudient whistlings in a scale outside the daily range of ears. ☞Stephen Vincent Benét writes suggesting G.K.C.'s *Ballad of the White Horse* as a comment on our present anxieties. ☞Steve's own very fine poem *Metropolitan Nightmare,* about N. Y. being eaten up by the termites (in the volume *Burning City*) can also be read as a hodiernal allegory. ☞We know an old housekeeper on L. I., who calls them *termice*; and says of a child "something stunned his growth." ☞Almost all good poems are more newsy than the daily paper; in some respects Walt Whitman is closer to the underscale flutings of the arriving age than the latest afternoon edition.

★ ★

☞Our much admired Anne Carroll Moore, superintendent of children's reading at the N. Y. Public Library, was given an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by her native State at the University of Maine commencement. Miss Moore was making frolic at Orono with such diverse notables as the chief engineer of the Grand Coulee dam and orchestrician Rudy Vallee. ☞Carl Sandburg will give the 4th July address at Cooperstown, N.Y., where the N. Y. State Historical Association is opening its Hall of Life Masks. ☞Among the masks is one of Thomas Jefferson to which the old libertad submitted when he was (in his own words) "an Octogenary worn down by sickness as well as age. Successive coats of thin grout plaistered on the naked head . . . . obliged to use freely the mallet and chissel . . . . real danger that the ears would separate from the head sooner than the plaister."

★ ★

☞The high toned old bailiwick on Lake Glimmerglass will begin next month celebrating the sesquicentennial of Fenimore Cooper. ☞Its aristocratic citizens have for many years hurried from the Hurons; so successfully that the wild Indians of our present civilization are rarely seen in its peaceful and well incremented landscape. ☞There are also some splendid fossils in that neighborhood. ☞We tried to persuade Mr. Bob De Graff to reprint *Deerslayer* in Pocket Books, for its centennial next year; but he says it's too long.

★ ★

☞The National Championship for Barber Shop Quartets will be held at the World's Fair July 22-26. Mr. O. C. Cash, founder of this competition, is an oil commissioner and himself has a well lubricated baritone. He commends Sig Spaeth's *Barber Shop Ballads* for ambitious mixed fours. ☞Richard Wormser, dealer in old and rare books at 22 West 48, N. Y. C., says our idea that a pearl necklace must be warmed on a human bosom (preferably female) to keep its lustre, is but a popular fallacy. Dick Wormser was in the pearl business for 15 years before entering the book trade. ☞Alfer Van Duym, the lively regisseur of Scribner Bookstore's windows, organized a G.O.P. convention of his own. He displayed a series of the magnificent old political cartoons from *Puck* 1874-88. Mature readers recall that Keppler, Opper, Blue, Gillam, Taylor and other *Puck* cartoonists drew with a pen sharper than a serpent's tooth. We know them nowadays in the collection of Louis Greenfield, 25 West 45, N. Y. C., who offers some of the old political masterpieces, matted for framing, at the minuscule price of $2.50 each. ☞To warm the chilblained cockles of political students or lovers of American controversy this is a highly intelligent chance.

★ ★

☞Our old friend and veteran syndicate editor George Matthew Adams (incidentally perhaps the world's keenest George Gissing collector) was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters by Ottawa University, Kansas. ☞Rev. John Haynes Holmes writes from Kennebunk Beach that his own relief reading this summer has been St. Augustine's *The City of God;* he gives us quotations that are excellently to the present need. ☞The first number of *Print* (Quarterly Journal of the Graphic Arts) seemed to us vigorous, comely, and protuitive. We specially liked the inset of modern wallpapers; and had many secret thoughts about architects, designers, and the coefficients of personal taste. *Print* will give all the pessimists a good run round the outskirts of the future. It is published by William Edwin Rudge, $5 a year, address Box 1893, 424 Temple St., New Haven, Conn.

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